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RICHARD WAGNER'S CONCEPTS OF HISTORY

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RICHARD WAGNER'S CONCEPTS OF HISTORY

by

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Es klang so alt, und war doch so neu.

– *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,* Act Two

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better way to enjoy these works than with family and friends. I might also mention the four times I saw *Die Walküre* in Austin during my work, two dress rehearsals and two public performances with both casts, in the space of less than a week. Different friends and colleagues accompanied me to various performances. No one ever asked me if there is such a thing as too much Wagner! Such is the level of support among the graduate students in the School of Music.

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RICHARD WAGNER'S CONCEPTS OF HISTORY

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Richard Wagner's published writings present various *topoi* to which he returned repeatedly. Often he adopts a historiographic approach in his arguments, and this feature suggested the present study concerning the composer's concepts of history. Wagner's historiographic approach is reflected in his discussions of the Greek influence on music. The contents of his personal libraries, first in Dresden and then in Zurich/Bayreuth, are also considered as further resources for the composer's study of history. Along with these sources, his autobiography, letters, and the extensive diary of his wife Cosima provide further substance for the present discussion. The shifts in Wagner's theories under the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer are also examined as is the composer's eventual realization that much of what he was attempting to do in his own works had already been foreshadowed in the early Italian humanist experiments that led to the birth of opera. Examples from his works, particularly *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, reveal his adoption of traits of various historical style periods in music history in his own compositions. Wagner's reverence for Palestrina and Bach are also highlighted.

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LIST OF EXAMPLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CTa	*Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, Vol. 1: 1869-1877, trans. Geoffrey Skelton
CTb	*Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, Vol. 2: 1878-1883, trans. Geoffrey Skelton
GS	Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, 2nd ed.
ML	Richard Wagner, *Mein Leben* [*My Life*], trans. Andrew Gray

INTRODUCTION

The present study weaves together ideas presented in a variety of primary source materials with the aim of coming to an understanding of what musical and extra-musical ideas shaped Richard Wagner's musical language. His many comments, both published and private, are often quite contradictory. He did not seek to promulgate his manner of composition but rather to explain and perhaps come to grips better with what he wanted to accomplish. Most of his writings were aimed at converts, or, more truthfully, they were a necessary component of his thought process and thus were really meant for himself. Indeed, by his own admission there is no overarching, unified theory he sought to articulate, yet there are many important *topoi* to which he returned repeatedly. The various layers and nuances of several of these form the bases of the following discussion. Because of the vast amount of primary source material relating to this composer, it can be fulfilling to trace how his concepts developed throughout his artistic career, for he was careful to document his ideas at virtually every step of his development, whether in published writings, letters, or diaries.

Wagner was clearly a product of his time and the situations in which he found and put himself throughout his life. His childhood was spent in an almost constant state of upheaval due first to the fact that his father died when Wagner was less than a year old. His mother remarried and Wagner was shuffled off repeatedly to various tutors, schools, and relatives. Thus, Wagner lacked true roots in any one place, and this trend continued for most of the rest of his life. Even when he was successful to some extent in any given

place, Wagner somehow managed to sabotage himself, either through his political views, by having affairs, or by going into debt. Where pertinent, a few of these facts are highlighted throughout the study.

Along similar lines, his early training in counterpoint with the Thomaskantor Christian Theodor Weinlig was something that made a deep impression on Wagner, as is noted in the course of the discussion. However, his teacher's attitudes towards Bach seem to have created a sort of ambivalence in Wagner towards Bach's music. Whereas Wagner could claim Palestrina as a culmination of early Christian polyphony, he had a more difficult time coming to grips with Bach's oeuvre. By the time Wagner took up the *Meistersinger* project in the 1860s, he was appropriating Bach as an example of historic nationalism – anachronistically, it should be added. Also, the great philosophical shift Wagner underwent on encountering Arthur Schopenhauer's ideas, created another sense of a need to reevaluate his own theories.

All of these factors added up to a restless psychological makeup for Wagner. Although evidently sure of his own biases and the correctness of his opinions, as his writings and other comments often forcefully make clear, he occasionally seemed to have required the time and opportunity to reflect on his own direction. Obviously, a major aspect of this need was his genuine interest in justifying his musical style through his historiographic comments. In many respects this comes across as a specifically German nationalistic agenda. However, most of his writings cited below in this study come out of the period in which he still was very much seeking recognition and acceptance, perhaps suggesting his attitude was expressed in a radically hyperbolic fashion in order to draw

attention to himself, his ideas, and his works. Certainly, he never stopped amending his thoughts and never avoided learning more about music, history, and society.

For the discussions herein, I focus on several issues: Wagner's personally acknowledged debt to ancient Greek thought, his preoccupation with how music is put together using the most basic elements of melody and harmony (and to some extent rhythm as well), his historiographic discussions of music history and their implied social commentaries, the unity of the arts (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), and his fascination with the music of Palestrina and Bach especially. Where possible, the discussion moves chronologically from Wagner's earliest writings before he made his name as composer to the products of his revolutionary period as an exile in Switzerland and finally to those reflecting on his many accomplishments. Occasionally, this chronological approach is disrupted between chapters. Ideas from many of the most important writings, including *Die Kunst und Revolution*, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, *Oper und Drama*, *"Zukunftsmusik,"* and *Beethoven*, are examined, along with some of the more obscure essays Wagner penned.

Rather than rely on the very dated and often inaccurate English translations of Wagner's writings published by William Ashton Ellis at the tail end of the nineteenth century, the present study features new translations made especially for this discussion. Admittedly, Wagner's writing is often turgid and not very direct. He seems to have adopted a quasi-erudite tone in order to affect a sense of authority. Even for German-readers, his style is quite stilted. Bryan Magee has suggested that perhaps Wagner was influenced by the writing style of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) or

perhaps several other philosophers as well. I have attempted to remain as true to the originals as possible, even retaining Wagner's lengthy, heavily concatenated sentence structure in most cases. The main source consulted for the writings was the composer's ten-volume *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* in the second edition (1887-88), the version most commonly encountered, thus making page references more useful.[1] Wagner began preparing and editing the first edition in 1871, and this was finished in 1883 only after of his death. This collection was not intended to be either a critical edition or comprehensive. Because it does not include every known writing by Wagner, a few essays had to be cited from other sources. (Individual writings consulted are listed chronologically in Appendix A.)

Wagner's letters provide corroborative evidence to add to the material in the published writings. Occasionally, as he could judge his audience more closely, Wagner is even more forthcoming with details about his music and methods in his correspondence. The standard collection in English of Wagner's letters, translated and edited by Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (1987), was consulted because it provides an excellent cross-sample of the composer's correspondence in addition to sound editorial practices.[2] More problematic is the composer's autobiography, *Mein Leben*, which covers his life from the beginning up through 1864.[3] He dictated this to his second wife Cosima at various times between 17 July 1865 to its eventual point of

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[1] Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, 10 vols., 2nd ed. (Leipzig: F. W. Fritzsch, 1887-88). (Hereafter referred to as GS vol., page.)

[2] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, trans. and ed. Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

[3] Richard Wagner, *My Life*, trans. Andrew Gray, ed. Mary Whittall (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983; reprint, 1992). (Hereafter ML.)

completion in 1880, using the notes he had made in his personal diary, the so-called *Brown Book*.[4] Significantly, her diaries often provide precise dates of some of these dictations, suggesting ways in which contemporary events cast new light on and reshaped Wagner's memory of those in the past. This issue has received little comment in Wagner scholarship, other than the rather obvious observation that Wagner often self-consciously edited his remarks about other women with which he had been involved — not a small issue in the composer's life, of course — to spare Cosima's feelings. The basic editing of *Mein Leben* was eventually entrusted to Wagner's close friend at the time Friedrich Nietzsche, whose own part in the discussion that follows will prove to be absolutely vital.

However, Wagner had another reason not to tell all in *Mein Leben*: He could not risk offending the sensibilities of some of his supporters, not least of whom was King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845-86), one of principal members of the composer's intended audience for the autobiography, which was published privately in a limited number of copies. Nevertheless, this issue of Wagner editing his comments about his affairs must have remained subservient to his general need to propagandize for himself and his cause as well as to romanticize his own personal travails and triumphs. Thus, although *Mein Leben* must be taken with some suspicion, one cannot dispense with the valuable insights it does offer.

[4] *The Diary of Richard Wagner, 1865-1882: The Brown Book*, trans. George Bird, ed. Joachim Bergfeld, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1980).

The remaining primary source that forms the basis of this study for the later years of Wagner's life are the diaries kept by Cosima, which were begun on 1 January 1869 and cover the period of their time together up to Wagner's death on 13 February 1883 in Venice.[5] Cosima, then still married to Hans von Bülow (1830-94), had moved into Wagner's house in Tribschen, near Lucerne on 16 November 1868. As they spent only a few days apart during this time, Cosima did have the best possible access to her husband's thoughts and observations on a day-to-day basis and quite faithfully updated her entries daily, at least in supposed smaller notebooks, if not in the actual diaries themselves. As will be seen in many quotations from the diaries, Cosima had every interest in recording her husband's thoughts and their conversations as she took them to be of such importance. The diaries also provide an invaluable insight into Wagner's listening and music-making habits, as well as documenting the final composition stages and first performances of the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (especially *Götterdämmerung*) and *Parsifal*.

Originally, the diaries were intended to serve at least two purposes. First, they were meant to serve as a sort of explanation by Cosima of why she left her first husband and dedicated herself to being with Wagner. The opening entries of January 1869 make this goal clear. Cosima wanted her children, Daniela (1860-1940) and Blandine (1863-1941), whom she had with von Bülow, and Isolde (1865-1919), Eva (1867-1942), and especially Siegfried (1869-1930), whom she had with Wagner, to understand better her

[5] *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, 2 vols., trans. Geoffrey Skelton, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, 1978, & 1980). (Hereafter vol. 1: 1869-1877 referred to as CTa; vol. 2: 1878-1883 referred to as CTb.)

motivations, ideally in the hopes that she would be forgiven for this turmoil she caused in all their lives. The diaries are actually dedicated to Siegfried, who as the composer's only son and thus his intended heir, was Wagner's pride and joy. The dedicatory opening page of the first volume of Cosima's diaries reads: "This book belongs to my children. / Tribschen, near Lucerne. / 1869. / Dedicated quite especially to Siegfried by Mama." In connection with this familial motivation for her efforts, Cosima also hoped the diaries would allow all of her children to become better acquainted in general with both herself and Wagner after their deaths.

A second, and perhaps subsidiary, reason behind Cosima's desire to record Wagner's daily thoughts and events in his life was to provide a sort of outline for an (auto)biography of the composer. By having direct quotations on hand as well as a myriad of other personal details, Wagner hoped that either he personally or, if that was not possible due to his demise, Cosima could tell the story of their lives together and the final stages of his creative life. On a couple of occasions Wagner even edited or annotated the text of some of his wife's recollections or made an entry when Cosima was indisposed. Thus, he seemed to have the intention to make sure that the twenty-one volumes of manuscripts Cosima was eventually to produce were as accurate and thorough as possible. Indeed, as Geoffrey Skelton, the translator of the English edition, points out in the Introduction, the total record amounts to nearly one million words, easily dwarfing Wagner's previous attempts, albeit after the fact, to make a personal record for himself as an *aide memoire* of the events in his life from 1846 through 1868. These are to be found in his own diary, the *Brown Book*, and date from 1868.

Most scholars had to resort to getting a second-hand view of Cosima's diaries through the writings of Carl Friedrich Glasenapp (1847-1915), because internal family politics after Wagner's death and the increasing infirmity of the composer's widow rendered the diaries inaccessible for a long time. Only two scholars were able to make systematic use of them before their eventual unsealing in 1972 when they were placed in the care of town of Bayreuth: Glasenapp, who actually took possession of all twenty-one volumes of the manuscripts as he prepared his biography of the composer, *Das Leben Richard Wagners,* and then Richard Graf du Moulin Eckert, Cosima's official biographer, who used them around the time of her death. Additionally, at some point right after 1930, Eva copied out a number of her father's sayings and sent them to the Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957), who had conducted the Italian premiere of *Götterdämmerung* in 1895 in Turin and subsequently led *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde,* and *Parsifal* in Bayreuth in 1930 and 1931, the first non-German conductor to do so. With the rise of National Socialism in Germany, Toscanini declined the offer to return to the Festival in 1933 and returned the collection of sayings. Between January 1936 and December 1937, Hans von Wolzogen (1848-1938), a longtime assistant to the composer, published them in eight consecutive issues of the official Festival journal he edited, *Bayreuther Blätter*, as Skelton notes.[6] Finally, with the study, transcription, and publication of Cosima's diaries in the 1970s (German edition, published 1976-77; English translation, 1978 and 1980) it became possible to gain firsthand knowledge of the

[6] CTa, 19-20.

details they contain and the biographical information concerning Wagner's comments about music and other composers.

All of this material has served as the bases of previous studies centered around Wagner, his theories, and how they are reflected in his compositions. Recently, one thinks especially of endeavors by Thomas S. Grey and Jean-Jacques Nattiez. In *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (1995), Grey provides as thorough a consideration of Wagner's seemingly more explicit theoretical constructs as any recent writer.[7] Even Grey must admit, however, that the composer left his comments open to a wide range of interpretation in many cases. Nattiez adopts a more modern and philosophical approach in *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation* (1993).[8] Yet his understanding and unpacking of many Wagnerian theoretical aspects, especially those relating to drama rather than music, run parallel to many of the discussions in the present study. Where appropriate, reference is made to this literature. Before these scholars, one would be remiss in not mentioning that Carl Dahlhaus undertook many significant projects of various scopes that directly referred to Wagner's theoretical writings.

In general, the inclination has always been to focus on certain seminal writings coming especially from the middle period of Wagner's creative life, while often ignoring his earliest and latest essays on more specific topics. The present study has specifically sought to avoid this trend. After all, a study focusing on history must take into account

[7] Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts*, New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[8] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

the history of the development of Wagner's ideas about history. Similarly, without giving priority to any one class of writings, information from the prose essays of all types, from the occasional to the larger theoretical works, is considered alongside diary entries and letters. The largely theoretical opening discussions focus on ideas. Indeed, Wagner's thoughts often border on philosophical. Subsequent sections attempt to shed light on the composer's works by integrating musical examples into the course of the discussion.

In many respects, it is this very musical grounding of the present discussion that represents something new, for few scholars have taken much notice of the implications of Wagner's own statements about the relationship between passages in his works to those of prior composers before Beethoven. Even when Wagner explicitly calls *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* "applied Bach," as he is quoted as having said in Cosima's diary, in relation to specific works by the Baroque master, the justifications and ramifications of Wagner's observations have been fairly well ignored previously. For example, Martin Geck outlines many of these comments without examining the musical works that Wagner relates to each other. The present study hopes to address this omission through its use of numerous examples.

Where Wagner scholarship has fared better is in establishing the composer's continued references to the theories and writings of ancient Greece. Nattiez and Michael Ewans have examined many of the same details considered below, including often the same writings naturally, in their own studies. However, their purposes were different from that encountered here. Ewans especially was interested in the debts Wagner as a

dramatist owed to the Greeks, particularly Aeschylus. In his study one gets the sense of Wagner's own reading and absorption of various ancient theoretical as well as practical ideas. This type of study is certainly related to the discussions of Wagner's various libraries he acquired for himself throughout his life. Curt von Westernhagen provides a catalog of the Dresden collection, which is in invaluable for understanding the source of many of Wagner's ideas, especially in the revolutionary period. Geck reflects this trend in his short study, as does L.J. Rather in his more extensive *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (1990). All of these studies laid the groundwork for what follows herein. Again, mere cataloging of works Wagner had access to without considering how he might have used them, especially as sources for ideas, has been the trend up until fairly recently. Whereas the source material for his dramatic compositions has been examined in fairly minute detail previously, the same cannot be said for his theoretical writings. Thus, a major concern of the following is to put Wagner's ideas in their appropriate contexts.

Of course, there can be no way to recover what was not documented at the time: conversations that were not recorded in some fashion, private discussions, lectures attended, music studied and/or heard on many occasions, what Wagner thought of many titles in his libraries – Did he even have a chance to read some of them? – and so on. For all that we do know about Wagner through his own writings and the diaries, there are probably as many questions raised as answers provided. Fortunately, there is sufficient material available to corroborate what he thought about the many topics explored below, including how he reflected his ideas in his own compositions and published writings.

Chapter 1, "History, Historiography, and Historicism," gives an overview of Wagner's libraries in Dresden and Zurich/Bayreuth, the sources of many of his theoretical ideas as well as musical inspirations for his own compositions. Wagner was an avid reader and often discussed the concepts he gleaned from this habit with family and friends. (The contents of his libraries with respect to early music and music histories before Beethoven are outlined in Appendix B.) A discussion of his concept of historic music and his critique of how others had made use of music of the past concludes this section. In "The (Re)unification of the Arts in the Theater and Society" in Chapter 2 the emphasis is on Wagner's debt to ancient Greece for many ideas about the unity of the arts and specific theoretical rationalizations of melody and harmony. Many of the ideas the study explores here developed after his flight from Dresden in 1849 and are treated in a separate section before the discussion on harmony itself. Although Wagner recognized that harmony of any useful fashion in his reckoning was a product of the Renaissance, he first derived it from melodic principles, much as the ancients had done. The final section in this chapter deals with the aftermath of Wagner's discovery of Schopenhauer in 1854. Because the philosopher considered music to be a representation of the world in and of itself, Wagner took this as an opportunity to revise his formulation for his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

After these largely theoretical preliminary issues, the study turns to Wagner's music itself and how he reflected aspects of earlier style periods in his own works. Chapter 3 delves into influences from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and folk music. Wagner was not above mixing elements of various eras in his works to create rich

historical tapestries, and this tendency is discussed here. Also, the importance of counterpoint in composition (and thus no longer a mere theoretical construct) and Wagner's related reverence for Palestrina are explored in this chapter. Wagner was not alone in his admiration for Renaissance polyphony in the nineteenth century, of course, and the possible influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on his thinking is examined.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with Wagner's ideas about music of the Baroque Era. The former focuses on the rise of opera. As will be seen, Wagner initially seemed to base his discussions of early opera not on the early humanist experiments but rather on works with which he would have had more familiarity. In many cases, his discussions are so generalized it is difficult to determine what era(s) and composer(s) he has in mind. His historiographic conclusions are that the rise of opera had disastrous effects both on contrapuntal music and the spoken theater. He also discusses musical form, especially Bar form, for the first time in a specific work. He used that form in various fashions in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Along with the development of opera, Wagner also criticizes the increase in virtuosic singing at the expense of the drama.

The study shifts to Wagner's attitudes towards the music of Bach in Chapter 5. A short discussion of Wagner's reappraisal of counterpoint as a valid means of musical expression gives way to a study of his music as what he called "applied Bach." The focus is very much on the preludes and fugues of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which Wagner often read though at home with his family and friends. In several cases, he often related passages in Bach's works to his own. Again, following Wagner's own lead, *Die Meistersinger* is the principal work considered. I untangle some details of the

autobiographical nature of this work, mainly because they seem to offer more insight into Wagner's character than his reputation does and show how closely he identified with his work and thus with Bach's music.

As a conclusion, Wagner's understanding and assumption of "Opera as Renaissance" is the central focus of Chapter 6. Here for the first time Wagner refers openly to the Renaissance efforts to recreate Greek tragedy in his 1871 lecture *Über die Bestimmung der Oper*. Using Nietzsche's scholarship as a resource, I demonstrate how Wagner apparently learned many historic details from the philosopher and classical scholar. Thus, towards the end of his career as a composer and as a published philosopher about the relationship between opera and drama, there is a certain amount of satisfaction he could take in the fact that many of his essays led up to the same conclusion using similar, if not identical, information.

As Dahlhaus has pointed out, since Wagner's intention was to avoid divulging too much about his compositional method and other technicalities in his published writings, one is obliged to take his compositions and view them through the prism of the many things he conveyed in words, whether public or private.[9] This is a primary aim of this study. Finally, Wagner is seldom discussed without mention of his progressive tendencies: his formal freeness, extended harmonic vocabulary, chromaticism, synthesis of various source materials to fit his needs, use of a large orchestra, demands he places on the singers and other musicians, etc. As Martin Geck mentions, it is somewhat ironic that

[9] Dahlhaus, "Wagner's 'A Communication to my Friends': Reminiscence and Adaptation," *Musical Times* 124 (1983): 89-90.

a composer who was so interested in the music and drama of the past is now regularly known only for "The Music of the Future." It is my intention that the present discussion will go some way towards rectifying this issue and acknowledging that even as he looked towards the future, Wagner was constantly gazing backwards as well. His integration and sublimation of past music into his own works demonstrates not only his great knowledge and interest in past musical styles but also his need to relate his own works to the arch of history that had come before him. By its very nature then, Wagner's music is in many ways truly timeless.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND HISTORICISM

> His intended work *The Destiny of Opera* is very much occupying R.'s thoughts, and many of his conversations now lead in this direction. The significance of the orchestra, its position as the ancient chorus, its huge advantage over the latter, which talks about the action in words, whereas the orchestra conveys to us the soul of this action — all this he explains to us in detail. Every utterance from him is doctrine to me.
>
> — Cosima Wagner's diary (Monday, 16 January 1871)[1]

In the spring of 1871, Richard Wagner (1813-83) was sketching a lecture entitled *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* [*On the Destiny of Opera*] for the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin.[2] Having been elected to the academy as a foreign member in May 1869 during his second sojourn in Switzerland, he traveled with his wife Cosima (1837-1930) to the Prussian capital in April 1871 and delivered his talk during a plenary session on 28 April. Although his wife predictably took his views as dogmatic, she was somewhat of an exception. The composer was constantly at pains to make his aims and ideas more intelligible to others, not simply to have them accept his musical style as a given but, more significantly, to understand why he had developed it the way he had. As Carl Dahlhaus has pointed out, Wagner usually addressed himself to those he considered to be his friends and supporters, those who had willingly and inquisitively come to his writings through a favorable impression of his music.[3] One need only glance through the titles of

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[1] CTa, 323.

[2] In all matters of titles and dates for Wagner's writings, I follow the list given by Nattiez, see pp. 303-22.

[3] Carl Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 115.

some of his essays, or read his preface to his collected writings dated in manuscript 22 May 1871 to appreciate the centrality of this point:

> Welchem Leserkreise ich mit dieser Sammlung nun gegenüber zu stehen haben werde, muß mir für die Beurtheilung nicht nur meines Wirkens, sondern auch der im heutigen Stadium unsrer deutschen Kulturbewegung sich geltend machenden Elemente, von großer Wichtigkeit sein. Man hat da angefangen mich ernsthaft zu nehmen, wo nichts wahrhaft ernst genommen wird, nämlich in der Sphäre unsrer wissenschaftlich sich gebärdenden Belletristik, in welcher Philosophie, Naturforschung, Philologie, und namentlich auch Poesie mit witziger Manier behandelt werden, außer wenn unbegreifliche Gründer zu irgend einer unbedingten Anerkennung vorhanden sind. Ich habe bemerkt, daß dieses System biederer Calomnie sich auf die Annahme dessen gründet, daß die dort besprochenen Schriften und Bücher vom Leser nicht gelesen werden. Zum ernstlichen Lesen meiner Schriften haben sich dagegen Solche veranlaßt gefühlt, auf welche meine dramatischen Kompositionen vom Theater aus mit bedeutender Anregung gewirkt hatten.[4]
>
> [In what circle of readers I will now have to stand with this collection must be of great importance to me, not just for the judgment of my endeavors, but also concerning how the creative elements herein are contributing to the present stage of our German cultural evolution. People have begun to take me seriously in this, where nothing is taken seriously, namely in the sphere of our seemingly scientific fiction (*belles lettres*), in which philosophy, natural science, philology, and especially poesy are treated in a flippant manner, except when one of them is afforded an unqualified appreciation for unfathomable reasons. I have noticed that this system of honest calumny is based on the assumption that the writings and books discussed there have not even been read. On the contrary, some people on whom my dramatic compositions left a meaningful impression have felt induced to read my writings in earnest.][5]

Wagner wrote and discussed his own place in the evolution of music, especially dramatic music, not to convert and indoctrinate the masses but primarily to allow himself to be better understood by those who had already converted, at least tentatively, to his new ways of thinking and expressing himself in his music dramas. He had previously explained his goal in this regard in connection with his trip to Berlin succinctly in a letter dated 1 February 1871 to his friend and supporter at the Prussian court Alwine

[4] GS 1, v. All translations from GS are my own. A list of Wagner's writings cited in this study is included in Appendix A.

[5] The date Wagner gives at the end, July 1871, is actually the date of publication.

Frommann: "I want to try to gain an understanding for myself: without this I have neither the ability nor the desire to achieve anything."[6]

In order to understand better the future and, indeed, what was taking place at present, Wagner usually began by summing up what he understood of the past,[7] as he had come to understand it through his own private studies of history and his personal contacts with his contemporaries and their works, as well as from his vast experience performing the works of his predecessors. These summaries often feature prominently in his writings. Here Wagner attempted to rationalize both for his readers and for himself the path he felt his own art must take. His arguments vary from showing the logical place of his own works in the development of music by resorting to a historiographic approach, echoing developments in music criticism and the fledging field of musicology, to discussions of contemporary performance practice as it related to his works and music-making in general, to highly philosophical and esoteric musings on the nature of the arts, especially music and drama, and finally, to the topical and political writings, which do relate, at least tangentially, to his artistic vision.

Within his writings, several clear threads of thought emerge as Wagner ponders the nature of music and drama. Two of these especially relate directly to his ideas about music and its composition: melody and harmony. Although these two elements feature prominently in many of his writings, critical reception of Wagner's ideas regarding how he conceptualized them is usually limited to a review of certain seminal works, focusing

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[6] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, trans. and ed. Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 779.

[7] Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 115.

especially on *Oper und Drama* (begun after August 1850 and completed 10 January 1851; published 1852). This is certainly understandable, as Wagner does devote a great deal of space to these topics in this, his most-extended treatise. Yet such a selective reading obscures the fact that he emphasizes these two elements especially as crucial aspects of his own musical style by their very repetition in his writings and that he derived his interest in these aspects of music from observations regarding how they were employed, from the earliest music up to that of his time. These are issues he comments on time and time again throughout his career, both in his published writings and elsewhere, such as in Cosima's diaries, his own *Brown Book*, and numerous letters.

The very fact that Wagner displayed a continuous preoccupation with certain topics that can be traced throughout his writings and other important documents demonstrates another, and in many ways equally important, predilection of the composer to create a historical overview of his subjects. These summaries have already been alluded to as the composer's means to account for his place in music history. Yet they are also reflective of his need to create a personal history of his own concepts and musical style. Thus, Wagner's reliance on history takes two main forms in his writings: (1) he creates historiographic narratives in order to show the bases of his own style, and (2) these histories themselves become a recurrent thread he uses to emphasize certain aspects of his own theoretical constructs, such as his ideas about melody and harmony, which are important to his conception of music and drama. One is tempted to liken the composer's repetition of certain *topoi* in his various writings to his use of *Leitmotiv*. But

in a largest sense, history is a means both to demonstrate the development of the Wagnerian style and to reinforce its right and need to exist.

By way of an introduction to Wagner's interpretations, both musical and rhetorical, of music history, it would first be profitable to have an overview of what reference sources he had available to him. Fortunately, much information related to his reading habits has been preserved in various fashions. Despite the vast amount of information we do possess, our knowledge of this must remain somewhat incomplete, not the least because we certainly lack a full understanding of how Wagner might have apprehended many central ideas without seeing them through the prism of his own literary and musical works. Understanding Wagner, as much as that is possible, does not mean one understands Wagner's ideas about his various source materials. Mere catalogues of titles he read do not explain how he as an artist synthesized the concepts contained therein for his own purposes. The best one can hope for is clear statements about topics such as historicism in music. As will be seen, this is one of the more lucidly detailed explanations Wagner gave about his approach to musical materials. Because he was so interested in history and collected so many sources relevant to his compositions, there can be no better place to begin the consideration of the place the broad concept of history played in his theories and works than with what we do know about his own libraries.

Wagner's Libraries as Sources for Music History

That Wagner relied on historical source material in creating the plots of his music dramas is well known. While these have been examined in detail,[8] little has been made, except for a few instances, of Wagner's reading material outside of the older literary sources from which he drew the plots for his music dramas. For example, few discussions of the composer's music fail to mention, at least in passing, antecedents such as the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200), *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach (ca. 1170-ca. 1220), or *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg (fl. 1200-20), to cite but a few of the most prominent examples. At the same time, one searches in vain for discussions of musical inspirations Wagner himself acknowledged other than those he absorbed through direct acquaintance with the works of his contemporaries. The influence of Beethoven and Weber is clear, but where did Wagner gain his intimate knowledge of chorale style, for example, which is so important in *Tannhäuser, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and *Parsifal*? An examination of Wagner's reading habits and the scores he collected throughout his life can help to explain the knowledge of historical styles displayed in his works. By way of analogy to his musical procedures, one need only reflect on the composer's usual approach to libretto construction.

[8] See for example Elizabeth Magee, *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), especially pp. 38-46, dealing with Wagner's borrowings from the Dresden Royal Library. This study is especially illuminating for the development of what was to become Wagner's largest project. Unfortunately, although there are copious (and often confusing) records of borrowings from the Royal Library, no such parallel records exist for the musical materials held by the Royal Theater Library.

The debate can never be settled as to exactly how and why Wagner interspersed elements of one tradition with another when creating his libretti. Nonetheless, it is readily acknowledged that what he set out to portray in *Siegfrieds Tod*, his first attempt at what became *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, is not so much a dramatization of the *Nibelungenlied* as a retelling of the story as he thought most appropriate for his artistic goals, for example. He was not above conflating and combining and thus reshaping whatever he needed from other sources well outside the scope of this single medieval epic. In the end, the cycle of music dramas the composer created relates no more directly to the *Nibelungenlied* than to any of his other, numerous sources. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is no mere dramatization of the story he found in any one source. Wagner did not consider it essential to adopt a story wholesale for dramatic presentation in music; instead, he refined it, using the myths contained in his sources as points of departure.

In this connection, most of Wagner's literary sources have been uncovered and analyzed in great detail. Indeed, many had already received notable scholarly attention before they attracted Wagner's interest. It was due to the scholarship of others that he was able to come to know so many of these ancient tales in modern versions. His personal library in Dresden, where he served as assistant Kapellmeister to the Saxon Court, having been officially appointed to these duties on 2 February 1843,[9] and that in Bayreuth left at the time of his death in 1883 have been discussed and cataloged as fully

[9] ML, 247.

as possible, as will be discussed below. The circumstances of the survival of the Dresden collection, which was long thought lost by scholars, is nothing short of miraculous.

Because Wagner had to flee Dresden in May 1849 under threat of arrest for his participation in the revolution there, he had no choice but to leave his prized collection behind. How highly he valued his library is attested to by the account contained in *Mein Leben*:

> My nice little dwelling [situated on the Ostra-Allee with a view of the Zwinger], fit for a royal Kapellmeister, was adorned by three treasures: a concert grand from Breitkopf & Härtel, of which I had made myself the proud possessor; then, hanging above a stately writing desk … , the title page [designed by Peter Cornelius] for the *Nibelungenlied* in a beautiful gothic frame, the only object of the three which has remained faithfully in my hands to this day; but above all the house was transformed into a home by the presence of a library, which I had acquired in one fell swoop in accordance with the systematic plan of study I had in mind to undertake. Upon the collapse of my Dresden existence, this library through some odd vicissitudes came into the possession of Herr Heinrich Brockhaus, to whom I owed five hundred talers at the time, and who had slapped a lien on it for this amount without telling my wife. I never succeeded in getting this unusual collection back from him. Old German literature formed the salient part of the collection, together with related medieval works, which led to my purchasing some expensive editions, as for example the very scarce old *Romans des douze pairs*. Beyond this there were the best historical works on the Middle Ages as well as on German history as a whole; at the same time I made sure to include the classical and poetic literature of all times and languages, among which I bought the Italian poets and also Shakespeare, as well as the French authors whose language I could cope with to some extent, in the expectation that I would one day find time to learn these languages I had neglected. I took the easier way with classical antiquity and purchased those translations that have themselves become classics, because I had already found in perusing Homer, whom I bought in the original Greek, that I would have to count on more leisure time than I could plausibly expect from my conducting duties if I wanted to find time to polish up my former knowledge of the Greek language; then in addition I provided most thoroughly for a study of world history and to this end did not fail to equip myself with many multi-volumed works in this field. Thus armed, I thought I could defy all the tribulations I clearly foresaw my career and my position would bring me …[10]

That Wagner was serious about devoting time to his personal studies cannot be doubted, for he wrote to his friend Karl Gaillard in Berlin on 5 June 1845 that he planned "to idle

[10] ML, 261-62.

away the whole of the coming year, i.e. devouring the contents of my library without producing any work …"[11]

Wagner deserved some respite by this time: in rapid succession he had launched three successful operas in Dresden, *Rienzi* (premiered on 20 October 1842), *Der fliegende Holländer* (2 January 1843), and *Tannhäuser* (19 October 1845), the latter having been completed on 13 April 1845, just before he proposed the aforementioned rest period. Yet the year-long idleness and the likely desire to live above his means and enjoy his new-found fame evidently created the need for Wagner to borrow the sum of five hundred talers from Heinrich Brockhaus (1804-74), who with his brother Friedrich (1800-65), oversaw the family publishing firm F.A. Brockhaus in Leipzig. Friedrich had married Wagner's older sister, Luise (1805-72), in 1828. The oriental philologist Hermann Brockhaus (1806-77), a third brother, had married another of Wagner's sisters, Ottilie (1811-83), in 1836. Thus, the loan agreement (dated 22 April 1846) between Heinrich Brockhaus and Wagner would have seemed more like a friendly family transaction than a formal business undertaking. However, in a recollection of the loan made in 1850, Heinrich Brockhaus states that Wagner agreed in the signed document to repay a minimum of one hundred talers, representing part of the capital plus five percent interest, in 1847. Since Wagner repaid nothing on either the capital or the interest, Heinrich was

[11] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 123.

assured by the composer through his agent in Dresden, Eduard Fleck, that Brockhaus could indeed keep the books.[12]

Despite these facts, Wagner made several more attempts to recover his library from Heinrich Brockhaus. When the publisher visited Liszt in Weimar on 28 July 1849, Brockhaus seemed positive about the possibility of settling the matter when Liszt brought it up, which Wagner naturally found encouraging.[13] Wagner even wrote to his brother-in-law Hermann on 2 February 1851 that Heinrich would be more likely to receive adequate compensation were he to return the books, which were intended as collateral for the loan, not as repayment.[14] In the end, the books stayed in storage at the publishing firm, even though the matter came up at least once again when Liszt and Wagner visited Heinrich Brockhaus in Leipzig in the spring of 1873.[15] Besides the return of several copies of scores of Wagner's operas in 1852, given into the trust of the composer's friend Theodor Uhlig, this reacquaintance marked the only other time when Brockhaus gave up any of the books. In April 1873, he made a present of the aforementioned nine-volume *Romans des douze pairs* to Cosima Wagner.[16]

The books survived the years and the Second World War safe but utterly neglected until F.A. Brockhaus moved to Wiesbaden and the collection was

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[12] Curt von Westernhagen, *Richard Wagners Dresdener Bibliothek, 1842-1849: Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte seines Schaffens* (Wiesbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1966), 75. Heinrich Brockhaus's documents concerning this transaction were still in the archives of F.A. Brockhaus at the time Westernhagen was writing.

[13] Westernhagen, 76.

[14] Westernhagen, 77.

[15] Westernhagen, 77-78.

[16] Westernhagen, 80-81.

rediscovered.[17] By the time Curt von Westernhagen cataloged it in 1966, Wagner's Dresden library contained 169 titles, consisting of around four hundred volumes in all.[18] At the request of Heinrich Brockhaus, for reasons unknown to her at the time, Wagner's first wife Minna had made her own less detailed list in September 1849, several months after Wagner's departure in May from Dresden, where she remained behind.[19] She included twenty-nine more items (an additional eighty volumes approximately) that were not found with the rest of the collection over a century later.[20] What has always been missing is a list of scores in the collection, something that evidently was always taken for granted, as neither Brockhaus, Minna, Westernhagen, or even Wagner himself seems to have taken much interest in these, save for the request Wagner made for the return of scores for his operas to Uhlig. As this issue is not addressed by Westernhagen, one might reasonably assume that there was no music out of the ordinary, certainly nothing rare, in Wagner's library. Nonetheless, Wagner did have the repositories of the Dresden royal musical establishment at his disposal while he served as second Kapellmeister there.[21] These resources stretched back as far as that of any court music ensemble in Germany.

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[17] L.J. Rather, *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 5.

[18] Rather, 6.

[19] Westernhagen, 75-6.

[20] Rather, 6.

[21] As noted above, there are no records of what scores Wagner might have borrowed from the Court and studied other than the works he was known to have conducted. For the latter, though these are obviously limited in scope, see the summaries by John Warrack, "The Musical Background," in *The Wagner Companion*, ed. Peter Burbidge and Richard Sutton (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 85-112; David Breckbill, "Wagner as a Conductor," in *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner's Life and Music*, ed. Barry Millington (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 99-102; and Thomas S. Grey, "Musical Background and Influences," in *The Wagner Compendium*, see especially 64-79. Of course, after his time in Dresden, Wagner was never again employed as a conductor, although he did have occasion to conduct again. Yet as his Bayreuth holdings show, he clearly continued to study a variety of scores. (See below.)

Thus, this oversight regarding Wagner's study of scores of older music is unfortunate, because even before Westernhagen's catalog of the Dresden collection was completed, most of the composer's literary sources for his works had been discovered. Yet his musical debts still remain a matter of debate, conjecture, and, to a great extent, confusion.

Since the literary contents of Wagner's two libraries have received so much comment elsewhere, it would seem more fruitful in the present discussion concerning the development of Wagner's concept of his own musical style to focus instead on his holdings in this regard. In the Dresden collection, the composer possessed only one true music history, albeit of severely limited scope, Karl Eduard Philipp Wackernagel's two-volume *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von Martin Luther bis auf Nicolaus Herman und Ambrosius Blaurer* (1841).[22] As a companion to this he had one practical manual, Nikolaus A. Janssen's *Wahre Grundregeln des Gregorianischen oder Choralgesanges* (1846). Westernhagen dismisses the latter of these by simply noting that one must remember "that looking after church music also was among the obligations of the Hofkapellmeister."[23] However, neither would seem to have been of much obvious use to Wagner while he was serving the Saxon court and instead probably reflect his own compositional predilections.

Although Wagner was prevailed upon to provide music for some especially solemn, quasi-religious occasions in Dresden, his duties would not normally have included presiding over or providing music for regular religious services. Instead, an

[22] A list of Wagner's holdings of early music and music histories before Beethoven is included in Appendix B.

[23] Westernhagen, 59.

assistant music director was hired for these duties, August Röckel (1814-76), although one may again assume that Röckel spent less time on religious music than on orchestral and operatic endeavors, for there was a sharp division between the various components of the ensembles in Dresden, as Wagner commented on at length as noted below. However, there was at least one important qualification that the new assistant could fulfill that Wagner and his other colleagues did not that gives a hint as to the particular way some of Röckel's time was meant to spent in Dresden: Röckel was Catholic.[24] Röckel also became a longtime friend of Wagner and was sentenced to prison for his part in the Dresden uprisings, his death sentence having been commuted.[25]

The Hofkapelle was already an old establishment by the time Wagner took up his duties in Dresden. In fact, on 22 September 1848 it celebrated its three hundredth anniversary during his tenure. His laudatory toast to the ensemble on that occasion, "Trinkspruch am Gendenktage des 300jährigen Bestehens der königlichen musikalischen Kapelle in Dresden" ["Toast on the Occasion of the Tercentary of the Existence of the Royal Musical Kapelle in Dresden"], notes that when one thinks of the ensemble by that name at the time, the immediate assumption is that the orchestra is what is meant. Although the ensemble originally developed out of the court chapel choir (*Kantorei*), it had become increasingly secular and public in function.[26] In an interesting parallel to his later metaphor in *Oper und Drama* where music is a woman that needs the seed of poetry

[24] ML, 253.
[25] ML, 439 (and fn.) and 481.
[26] GS 2, 230.

to achieve its highest ends,[27] Wagner refers to the choir as having been the female womb out of which the orchestra developed. Having passed through three centuries of existence, the two component parts of the Kapelle, the now mature "man" (the orchestra) and his "wife" (the vocal institute), ought to be rejoined in closer connection as far as actual music-making is concerned, Wagner maintains.[28]

In a report dated 1 March 1846, which he presented to his immediate superior, Baron August von Lüttichau (1786-1863), general intendant of the Dresden court theater, Wagner had already made some observations about the musical activities in Dresden, mainly concerning the orchestra. Apparently, from early on in his appointment at the court, Wagner had been under the impression that his input was needed to undertake a complete reorganization of the Kapelle. Just over two months after his appointment, Wagner wrote as much on 7 April 1843 to his friend Samuel Lehrs, a German classical scholar who had settled in Paris:

> Only six months ago I was still a vagabond who would not even have known where to get hold of a passport — whereas I now have tenure for life with a handsome salary [1500 taler per year] and the prospect that it will continue to increase, and I control a sphere of influence such as has been granted to few men. No secret is being made of the fact that I am expected to undertake a thorough artistic reorganization of the musical life here, as a result of which all the proposals I care to make are accepted unconditionally, which increases the respect people have of me, since they have long been accustomed to seeing Reissiger as totally ineffectual. But so as to prevent all my time from being taken up with routine duties, a second music director [Röckel] has now been appointed. I can ask for no more.[29]

In truth, at best, his suggestions were ignored; at worst, Wagner aroused more than a little anxiety and professional jealousy with some of his radical ideas. To be fair, Wagner was

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[27] cf. *Oper und Drama*, GS 4, 103.
[28] GS 2, 232.
[29] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 107.

the second Kapellmeister, after Karl Gottlieb Reissiger (1798-1859), who held his position with decreasing activity from 1828 until his death. And, as Wagner notes, an assistant for him was hired as well. Despite these facts, Wagner did ask for more in his 1846 report, "Die königliche Kapelle betreffend" ["Concerning the Royal Kapelle"].

In this report in the form of a letter dated 2 March 1846 and addressed to General Intendant of the Theater Lüttichau, Wagner points out that every time he sought to protect the orchestra's interests at court, his desires "had to give way in the face of a constant conflict of interests with the theater and the latter's myriad of needs …"[30] Wagner's recommendations were practical and well explained. He suggested changes in policy for the hiring of orchestral musicians, an increase in their salaries and their work-load in the form of a new winter concerts series, and an improvement in the seating plan so that the musicians and conductor could see each other better. None of these was acted on at the time. One should note all this professional activity, which was intended for the benefit of the ensemble and thus all of Saxony, not for his own personal gain, did come at the expense of Wagner's intended rest period as well.[31] Also, these facts all do show Wagner's concern in Dresden was mainly for the orchestra, making it doubtful that he possessed Wackernagel's collection of chorales and Janssen's chant manual for truly practical reasons associated with his duties.

Although the contents of the composer's Dresden library shed only scant light on his interests in music history and historic music, even more can be learned from the

[30] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 126.
[31] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 56-7.

collection he left at the time of his death in Bayreuth. However, in this case, multiple and totally unrelated sources exist to corroborate what was in Wagner's possession. First and foremost are the many references to reading and collecting books and playing through various scores in Cosima's diaries. She faithfully recorded both what she and Wagner read for entertainment as well as their own edification. Also, on several occasions she notes that she wanted to preserve her husband's remarks and opinions about pieces of music as they looked through them, often with the help of house guests who could render complicated piano music and arrangements of operatic and orchestral works on the piano far better than either Wagner or Cosima. These comments improve significantly upon what one must have assumed to have been the case with Wagner in Dresden as well; only now there is direct evidence of what scores were in his possession, as well as what he thought of the merits of these works.

Although no official published catalog of the Bayreuth collection exists, a typed list is made available to those doing research there. As Rather notes, this list is not as accurate as one might hope in representing the composer's library — it includes books published (and therefore obviously acquired) after Wagner's death. Also, it is not as complete in its bibliographic citations as Westernhagen is, for example.[32] Aided by this list, Rather offers an admirable summary of the Wagners' reading habits. Unfortunately, this commentary again focuses almost exclusively on literature, history, philosophy, and religion, all of them now represented in Wagner's collection by a variety of cultures and nationalities, unlike the case in Dresden. More useful is the discussion of Wagner's

[32] Rather, 13.

Bayreuth holdings of music made by Martin Geck in consultation with Carl Friedrich Glasenapp's six-volume authorized biography of the composer, *Das Leben Richard Wagners* (Leipzig, 1876-1911).[33]

By combining all these commentaries and focusing especially on the primary source account found in Cosima's diaries, it is again possible to determine what books Wagner collected for himself starting from his time in Switzerland at Tribschen and on through his final years in Bayreuth. Again, one must remember that especially in the case of the scores, the diaries contain ample evidence that they were used often, for domestic music-making, study, and discussion, which often borders on tutelage, with others who gathered around the composer at home. Some of the contents are not particularly surprising, while others seem downright odd (see Appendix B). As a replacement for the practical manuals found in Dresden, of which there are still a few examples to be found such as Max Kraussold's *Historisch-musikalisches Handbuch für Kirchen- und Choralgesang* (1855), Wagner now has true historical surveys of music, with a definite concentration on early music. August Reissmann's survey, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1863-64), includes an anthology of full pieces at the end of each volume and covers Wagner's works up through *Tristan und Isolde*. Others, such as

[33] Martin Geck, "Richard Wagner und die ältere Musik," in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora (Regensburg: Bosse, 1969), 123-40. The first volume of Glasenapp's work was originally published in 1876 under the title *Richard Wagner's Leben und Wirken*. By the third edition, Glasenapp changed the title to the more familiar one in the version Geck consulted. (See the Introduction of the present study for more information on the manner in which Geck and others had access to the information contained in the diaries before their eventual publication.)

The summary list Geck provides is, of course, far more useful as an overview than the discussions of Wagner's reading habits given in the course of lengthier discussions by Glasenapp and Rather or the ultimate source, Cosima's diaries. However, as Geck's source was Glasenapp, the diaries having not yet been published, a certain amount of bibliographic information is sadly lacking, as Glasenapp was not making a catalogue of these books as much as discussing them in relation to the composer's biography.

Edmond vander Straeten's large-scale overview, *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle*, which was still very much in progress at the time Wagner began acquiring it, Rudolf Georg Hermann Westphal's translation of Plutarch and his *Geschichte der alten und mittelalterlichen Musik*, and Oscar Paul's edition of Boethius' writings on music, were even more limited in their scope. There can be no question now of any of these having any practical significance for the composer in any sort of meaningful fashion with regards to his own composition projects; they were clearly meant for his own edification, not as sources for direct musical borrowings.

Wagner's interest in music of the Reformation is still evidenced by the presence of Philipp Wackernagel's collection of Martin Luther's religious songs. This inclination could be explained as a larger, nationalistic interest in German music, also making the presence of Ernst Otto Linder's survey of German lieder in the eighteenth century seem logical for a composer who otherwise showed limited interest in this genre. Even when the content was not directly related to Wagner's preference for German composers, as in Franz Michael Rudhardt's *Geschichte der Oper am Hofe zu München*, which concentrates on Italian opera at the Munich Court Opera, his own experiences must have made this necessary reference material for the composer, who himself had important premieres of operas in the Bavarian capital, *Tristan und Isolde* (on 10 June 1865), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (21 June 1868), *Das Rheingold* (22 September 1869), and *Die Walküre* (26 June 1870).

Biographies of composers were also well represented in Wagner's second collection. In Dresden one finds the single example from 1847 of Alexander

Ulibischeff's lengthy examination of Mozart's life in connection with general trends in music history and examples from his works. Westernhagen points out that Wagner did not make the effort to get another copy of this work, evidently preferring to replace it with the more erudite effort of Otto Jahn (1856-59).[34] This newer study was supported by Ludwig Nohl's edition of Mozart's letters (1865) as well as Franck's *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Zauberflöte* (1875), again demonstrating Wagner's interest in his predecessor's dramatic works. Wagner also had the more accessible and informal *Mozart — ein Lebensbild* (1866) in his collection.[35] To these he added the best biographies of Bach of the time, that by Carl Hermann Bitter (1865) and the brand new work by Philipp Spitta (1873 and 1879). For good measure, he also had on hand Anton Schmid's overview of Gluck's life and music (1854), again much like Ulibischeff's effort including supporting historiography, and Nohl's larger compendium of composers' correspondences (1867).[36]

As far as scores in his collection goes, again Wagner had a wide assortment of items available for his perusal. In fact, in every respect, his collection of scores was far wider reaching than his collection of literature about music might lead one to guess. In addition to the numerous musical examples included in other books, which often consist of complete works or at least larger sections or movements, Wagner had a considerable library of Renaissance polyphony. His interest in this is evident in abundance, especially in editions by leaders of the German Caecilian movement, Fathers Franz Xaver Witt

[34] Westernhagen, 59.
[35] Geck does not include information about the authorship of this title.
[36] Geck, 132-33.

(1834-88) and Carl Proske (1794-1861). From them he had masses, motets, and other liturgical music by composers such as Palestrina, Victoria, Hassler, Lassus, Morales, Viadana, Andrea Gabrieli, Anerio, Croce, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Vecchi.[37] Wagner's interest in this music has been little noted previously, despite such tell-tale signs as the fact that his own edition of Palestrina's *Stabat mater* made in 1848 for performance in Dresden came out in print in 1878, a fact noted in Cosima's diary entry for 2 August 1878 as Wagner read through the score.[38]

Even with the rise of instrumental music in the Baroque era, Wagner's interests were clearly still with vocal music, which is not surprising considering his own agenda as a composer. He had the most important large-scale vocal works by Bach that had thus far appeared in print: the *Mass in B Minor*; the *St. Matthew Passion* in the first edition published by Schlesinger, which owed its existence to Felix Mendelssohn's performance of the work in Berlin on 11 March 1829 from a copy made from the manuscript score in the possession of Karl Friedrich Zelter, director of the Berlin *Singakademie*; the *Christmas Oratorio*; the motets; and various cantatas. Among Bach's instrumental works, only *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is to be found, in several different editions. Likewise, with Handel the oratorios seem to have been of the most interest to Wagner. Along with Bach's preludes and fugues, six sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti formed the remainder of keyboard music before Mozart and Beethoven in Wagner's collection. The

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[37] Geck, 133.

[38] CTb, 128. In their "Notes," the editors of the diaries incorrectly give the year of publication as 1877 (see p. 1040). See also Chapter 3 of the present study. Wagner had offered his Palestrina arrangement to Breitkopf & Härtel in 1859, but they passed on the opportunity. C. F. Kahnt in Berlin eventually brought it out some twenty years later, perhaps more a sign of Wagner's increased notoriety than Palestrina's resurgence. (See also Geck, 131.)

fact that he was not an accomplished pianist by any means perhaps explains this lack of interest in other keyboard works, although several other fugues by Bach are mentioned occasionally in Cosima's diaries, especially some of the more elaborate organ works. As these were played by guests and not by the Wagners, it is of course possible that their guests brought along their own music or performed from memory.

That Wagner was well acquainted with the music of the Classical masters and had a larger collection of their works in his library will come as no surprise to anyone who has read any of his major essays on music. He refers to these works and the style of their composers over and over again in writings such as *Oper und Drama*, "*Zukunftsmusik*" (completed 13 September 1860; published 1861), and *Über die Bestimmung der Oper*, to cite but the most widely read of his essays. Along with Beethoven, the core repertoire with which Wagner concerned himself in many of his historical overviews centered on Gluck, Mozart, and Haydn. In these cases, he was concerned not just with vocal music but also with instrumental music, which in his estimate had finally gained enough ground and *gravitas* to receive serious consideration. Again, one notes the German nationalistic bias in his writings and library collection.

Wagner and "Historic Music"

Armed with this knowledge of music history and examples of pieces from various time periods, one would assume that Wagner would proceed to cite some of the examples

he had in his collection. Certainly, he would have had ample precedent for this procedure, such as Bach's cantata "Ein' feste Burg," which cites Luther's chorale. This well-known melody also features prominently in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony*, two other works Wagner certainly knew. However, Wagner seldom utilized direct quotations and even more seldom from well-known pieces, other than his own, of course.[39] The one rare example of his citing Luther's melody, his favorite chorale, is to be found in the *Kaisermarsch* (composed February through mid-March 1871; premiere on 14 April in Berlin). Here "Ein' feste Burg" was included as a programmatic reference to the Hohenzollerns' staunch Protestantism,[40] as well as a nationalistic pride in German culture and the natural hope that the new German Reich could continue to defend itself, making Luther's text seem appropriate in Wagner's view.

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[39] Self-quotation is to be expected in the *Ring*, but Wagner also quotes *Tristan* in *Meistersinger* (Act Three) and *Lohengrin* in *Parsifal* (Act One). Works that served as "studies" for music dramas also extend this trend. Material from *Siegfried* is contained in the *Siegfried Idyll* (composed November-December 1870) and two of the "Wesendonck Lieder" (1857-58, including revisions) are subtitled "studies for *Tristan und Isolde*." His "Kinder-Katechismus" (composed December 1873; revised 1874) includes, in its revised form, a reference to the end of *Götterdämmerung*, using the "glorification of Brünnhilde" motive.

Other than these examples of self-quotation, Wagner did reference other national musics in his early overtures *Polonia* (composed May-July 1836) and *Rule Britannia* (composed May 1837). He used themes from Weber's *Euryanthe* for the transfer of that composer's remains from London to Dresden in the wind band composition entitled *Trauermusik* (November 1844). Wagner's setting of Heinrich Heine's poem in French translation as "Les deux grenadiers" (December 1839-early 1840) predictably includes a quotation of the *Marseillaise*.

Besides the use of "Ein' fest Burg" in the *Kaisermarsch*, Wagner shared one other reference with Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony*: the "Dresden Amen." This traditional plagal cadential formula used in the Dresden Catholic Hofkapelle was harmonized by Johann Gottlieb Naumann (1741-1801), and this version appears both in *Parsifal* and Mendelssohn's symphony. [About the attribution of the Amen to Naumann, Cosima mentions that she and Wagner read a journal article noting that fact, "but R. and I feel it is much older" (entry for Sunday, 3 September 1882; CTb, 906).]

[40] *The Wagner Compendium*, 312.

Instead of merely resorting to wholesale adoptions of another composer's themes or style, Wagner adapted what he found in his studies of earlier music to his own needs. One encounters Baroque-like counterpoint in *Meistersinger* as well as folk styles and even thoughtful touches of contemporary chromaticism where appropriate. Wagner did not simply assume the musical style of his subject Hans Sachs' time in the sixteenth century, nor did the composer revert wholly to Baroque or Classical style to portray the historical setting of his plot. This practice of adapting and mixing elements freely from a variety of source styles echoes closely Wagner's similar tendencies in libretto construction noted previously. In fact, Wagner specifically addresses the issue of directly adopting familiar historical musical styles through quotation in a satirical passage in *Oper und Drama*, where he is highly derisive of this technique:

> Das historische Gewand der Oper — das ergiebigste, weil es nach Klima und Zeitalter auf das Bunteste zu wechseln im Stande war, — ist aber eignetlich doch nur das Werk des Dekorationsmalers und Theaterschneiders, wie diese beiden Faktoren denn in Wahrheit die allerwichtigsten Bundesgenossen des modernen Operakomponisten geworden sind. Allein auch der Musiker unterließ es nicht, seine Tonfarbenpalette für das historische Kostüm herzurichten; wie hätte er, der Schöpfer der Oper, der sich den Dichter zum Bedienten gemacht hatte, der Maler und Schneider nicht auch ausstechen sollen? Hatte er das ganze Drama, mit Handlung und Charakteren, in Musik aufgelöst, wie sollte es ihm unmöglich bleiben, auch die Zeichnungen und Farben des Malers und Schneiders musikalisch zu Wasser zu machen? Er vermochte es, alle Dämme niederzureißen, alle Schleusen zu öffnen, die das Meer vom Lande trennen, und so in der Sündfluth seiner Musik das Drama mit Mann und Maus, mit Pinsel und Scheere zu ersäufen!
>
> Der Musiker mußte aber auch die ihm prädestinirte Aufgabe erfüllen, der deutschen Kritik, für die Gottes allgütige Fürsorge bekanntlich die Kunst geschaffen hat, die Freude des Geschenkes einer "*historischen Musik*" zu machen. Sein hoher Ruf begeisterte ihn, gar bald das Richtige zu finden.
>
> Wie mußte eine "historische" Musik sich anhören, wenn sie die Wirkung einer solchen machen sollte? Jedenfalls anders, als eine *nicht* historische Musik. Worin lag hier aber der Unterschied? Offenbar darin, daß die "historische Musik" von der gegenwärtig gewöhnten so verschieden sei, als das Kostüm einer früheren Zeit von dem der Gegenwart. War es nicht das Klügste, genau so, wie man das Kostüm den betreffenden Zeitalter getreu nachahmte, auch die Musik diesem Zeitalter zu entnehmen? Leider ging dieß nicht so leicht, denn in jenen im Kostüm so pikanten Zeitaltern gab es barbarischer Weise noch keine Opern: eine allgemeine Opernsprache war ihnen daher nicht zu entnehmen. Dagegen sang man damals in den *Kirchen*, und diese

> Kirchengesänge haben in der That, wenn man sie heute plötzlich singen läßt, unserer Musik gegenüber gehalten, etwas überraschend Fremdartiges. Vortrefflich! Kirchengesänge her![41]
>
> [Historical garb in opera — the most fertile thing, because its variety has changed so much according to climate and period — is actually nothing more than the work of the scene painter and costume maker, both of whom have certainly, in truth, become the most important allies of the modern opera composer. However, the musician did not neglect to arrange his tone-color palette for creating historic costumes too; how could he, the creator of opera, he who made the poet his servant, also not outdo the painter and tailor? As he dissolved the entire drama, both the plot and characters, into the music, how could it remain impossible for him to make the designs and dyes of the painter and the tailor into musical water? He was able to break down all dams, open all sluices, which separate the sea from land, and thereby in the Deluge of his music drown the drama with man and mouse, brush and shears!
>
> The musician also had to fulfill the task for which he was predestined: to make for the German critic, for whom God's all-benevolent providence created art as is well known, the pleasure of a gift of this "*historic music*." His higher calling enthused him to get it just right.
>
> How would a "historic" music sound, if it were to make the proper effect? At any rate, different from a *non*-historic music. Yet wherein lies the difference? Obviously, in that "historic music" would have to be as different from the contemporary norm as the costume of an earlier time is from that of today. Wouldn't the cleverest thing just be to copy faithfully the music of a period exactly as one does with the costume of the same period? Unfortunately, this wouldn't be so easy, for, barbarically enough, in a period when costume was sufficiently piquant there was as yet no opera: a universal operatic language could not be copied from that time. However, back then people sang in *church*, and, in fact, these church songs do sound somewhat surprisingly strange in comparison to our music when suddenly sung today. Excellent! Let's use church songs then!]

As he notes that the opera house is no place for the heaviness and morality of the church, this solution is eschewed by Wagner, who also maintains that these trappings could apply only to the scenery, as it were, not to the main feature itself of opera, aria. Although a chorale could be quoted by the choir in a cathedral scene, for example, how could an aria in that scene be in a similar and thus homogeneous style? Clearly, the only thing a composer could do is create a new style:

> Hier eröffnete sich dem Musiker das unabsehbar graue Nebelfeld reiner, absoluter Erfindung: die Aufforderung *zum Erschaffen aus Nichts*. Sieh' da, wie schnell er mit sich einig wurde! Er hatte nur dafür zu sorgen, daß die Musik immer *ein wenig anders* klinge, als man der Gewohnheit nach annehmen müsse, daß sie zu klingen hätte, so klang jedenfalls seine Musik fremdartig, und ein richtiger Schnitt des Theaterschneiders genügte, um sie vollständig "historisch" zu machen….[42]

[41] GS 3, 272-73.
[42] GS 3, 274.

> Wollte der Komponist einen unmittlebar entsprechenden nackten Ausdruck geben, so konnte er dieß mit dem besten Willen nicht anders als in der musikalischen Sprechweise, die uns heute eben als verständlicher musikalischer Ausdruck gilt; beabsichtigte er nun, diesem ein historisches Kolorit zu verleihen, und konnte er dieß im Grunde nur dadurch für erreichbar halten, daß er ihm einen überhaupt fremdartigen, ungewohnten Beiklang gab, so stand ihm zunächst allerdings die Ausdrucksweise einer früheren musikalischen Epoche zu Gebote, die er nach Belieben nachahmen, und von der er nach willkürlichem Ermessen entnehmen konnte. Auf diese Weise hat sich denn auch der Komponist aus allen, irgend schmackhaften Styleigenthümlichkeiten verschiedener Zeiten einen scheckigen Sprachjargon zusammengesetzt, der an und für sich seinem Streben nach Fremdartigkeit und Ungewohntheit nicht übel entsprechen konnte.[43]
>
> [Here, before the musician, opened an impenetrable, gray layer of fog, that of pure, absolute invention: the invitation to *create something out of nothing*. Just look how quickly he came to terms with that! He only had to concern himself with always making his music sound *a little different* from what one would expect it to sound like based on what is taken as customary, thus making his music sound strange, and a judicious style from the costume-maker would suffice to make it completely "historical." …
>
> Should the composer wish to express himself immediately, plainly, and directly, he could do so no better with the best of intentions than through this musical speech, which today we take just as comprehensible musical expression; had he now intended to lend to this a historical coloring and thought this basically only attainable by giving it an entirely foreign, unusual overtone, then above all the first thing that would present itself to him is the means of expression of an earlier musical epoch, of which he could imitate his favorite and from which he could borrow according to an arbitrary whim. In this manner, the composer will have assembled a checkered jargon from all the tasty stylistic traits of various periods, which properly speaking would not correspond poorly to his desire for the foreign and unusual.]

This mixture of styles would make it hard for a composer to create any sort of impression of his own homogeneous personal style upon his audience. Another problem a composer would face is that as his new style became more common, he would continually need to adapt himself to newer ones to retain his individuality, as Wagner wryly comments.

Wagner concludes by noting that as a composer moves further and further into the realm of ever-newer styles, he would eventually out of necessity end up contradicting the plot with his music, "saying 'no,' where he actually wants to say 'yes.'"[44] This blind desire always to have something new before the public eventually leads to a new style in music, for which Wagner can find no other term for than "*Neuromantik*"

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[43] GS 3, 275.
[44] GS 3, 275.

["*Neoromantic*"].[45] Dahlhaus notes that this posture of Wagner's is calculated to distance himself from Meyerbeer, whose music has already been considered earlier in *Oper und Drama* and who is obviously the target of the attack on the use of hymn tunes just cited.[46] It also serves as a segue into a discussion of Berlioz's music as a perversion of Beethoven's style. Although this term was not new with Wagner,[47] his invocation of it signified a consciousness that there had been a shift in the paradigm of what Romanticism was and had been in the past. Dahlhaus suggests that in an age of positivism and industrialization such as the second half of the nineteenth century, music was the sole remaining art that could make any claims to having retained its Romantic tendencies. If Berlioz and Meyerbeer were neo-romantics, then so was Wagner in his own right.[48]

Yet what Dahlhaus calls the positivism of the new field of musicology had influenced Wagner in a very specific way, as will be shown below. The books and scores he had in his possession granted him a certain familiarity with the music of the past in a way that allowed him to go well beyond the mere use of it as "scene painting" or "costumes" in the sense for which he criticized other composers. Instead, for Wagner the integration of various stylistic features of past epochs in music history into his own style enriched his means of expression. This move, which will be noted below in relationship

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[45] GS 3, 276.

[46] Dahlhaus, "Neo-romanticism," in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 5.

[47] Dahlhaus, "Neo-romanticism," 4.

[48] Dahlhaus, "Neo-romanticism," 13.

to his comments about various composers and the periods in which they lived, in fact provided a wealth of different, illustrative traits upon which Wagner could draw as he explored and built upon the various ways in which melody and harmony had been purveyed by his predecessors. If anything, the nineteenth century, and Romanticism in general, provided the impetus as well as the means for looking backwards and forwards at the same time. That Wagner created his own complex style even as he demonstrated his knowledge of older music in his own works to go well beyond the level of mere quotation is a conspicuous feature of his oeuvre and one of his greatest original achievements.[49]

[49] The issue of originality as it reflects on historicism in nineteenth-century aesthetics is dealt with in detail in Chapter 1 of James Garratt's monograph *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, Musical Performance and Reception (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER 2

THE (RE)UNIFICATION OF THE ARTS

IN THE THEATER AND SOCIETY

> Wir können bei einigem Nachdenken in unserer Kunst keinen Schritt thun, ohne auf den Zusammenhang derselben mit der *Kunst der Griechen* zu treffen. In Wahrheit ist unsere moderne Kunst nur ein Glied in der Kette der Kunstentwickelung des gesammten Europa, und diese nimmt ihren Ausgang von den Griechen.
>
> — *Die Kunst und Revolution*[1]

> [We can make no progress in reflecting on our art without realizing its connection with the *art of the Greeks*. In truth, our modern art is but a link in the chain of the artistic development of all Europe, and it takes its lead from the Greeks.]

As Wagner developed his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk,* in which all of the related arts would unite to one musico-dramatic purpose, he continued to derive inspiration for his ideas from the ancient Greeks. He saw the distant past as representing an ideal when the individual attainments of dance, music, and poetry were employed simultaneously to depict tragedy in the great public amphitheaters of Greece. From some of his earliest recollections, Wagner took great interest in the ancients and the central place mythology occupied in their society. As he matured, he transformed those impressions into more detailed theories relating art to society in his own time. Specifically, Wagner saw the theater as the point of convergence for his own efforts due to its ability to guide individuals through its mirror-like ability to depict an analogue to real life on stage. Music could be used to heighten the effects of drama, thereby bringing an increased impact to the theatrical representation. Throughout his career as a composer and

[1] GS 3, 9.

commentator on the arts, Wagner continued to refine his theories about how the individual elements could combine to create an optimal outcome, something he saw lacking in contemporary opera. Despite the many transformations these equations relating the artistic components underwent, the composer always returned to the Greeks as a point of reference for his ideas. And even in the most theoretical of his discussions, Wagner repeated the central *topoi* of melody and harmony in his historically based arguments.

Ancient Greece as an Ideal

Like many of his predecessors especially in the Renaissance, Wagner made the best of the fact that he did not have access to actual music from antiquity. As others had been before him, he was inspired by the philosophical discussions on the nature of the arts and on their place in society that had come down from ancient Greece. Also, Wagner concentrated on those elements he believed most interested those in the distant past, melody, rhythm, and, to a lesser extent, harmony. His first encounter with Hellenic culture came when he was just six. His schoolmaster in Possendorf near Dresden read aloud to his students on various topics:

> … a biography of Mozart made a great impression on me, whereas the newspaper and magazine reports of the contemporary events of the Greek War of Independence excited me dreadfully. My love for Greece, which later fell with enthusiasm upon the mythology and history of Ancient Hellas, thus originated in intense and painful interest in the events of the present. In later years,

> the story of the struggle of the Greeks against the Persians always revived my impressions of this modern revolt against the Turks.[2]

While Wagner attended the Kreuzschule in Dresden from the ages of nine to fourteen, he studied Greek as part of the regular curriculum. Although he was not the best student of grammar, he was interested in the Greek language "because the stories from Greek mythology seized my imagination so strongly that I wanted to imagine their heroic figures speaking to me in their original tongue …"[3]

Decades later, when Wagner made the acquaintance of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), then head of classical philology at the University of Basel, it was their similar interests in antiquity and Schopenhauer that originally drew the two men together. In an open letter to the philosopher, "An Friedrich Nietzsche" (dated 12 June 1872; published 23 June in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*), Wagner noted his interest in the Greek language, which came at the expense of his Latin studies, adding his progress was such that his teacher hoped to guide him into philology. However, when Wagner's family moved back to Leipzig in late 1827, the instructors first at the Nicolai and then the Thomas schools were quick to ensure their student paid better attention to more practical subjects instead.[4]

Wagner's knowledge of ancient Greek was sufficient to allow him to make short translations as a student, but he found soon that he quickly lost the progress he had made

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[2] ML, 6. Many of these details are also covered, with different emphases, in Michael Ewans, *Wagner and Aeschylus: The "Ring" and the "Oresteia"* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), see especially 15-17.

[3] ML, 14.

[4] GS 9, 295.

as other subjects commanded his attention.[5] The composer showed a renewed interest in this field during his time in Paris (1839-42) when he made the acquaintance of Samuel Lehrs, who had just received a contract to translate Greek classics for the bookseller Didot.[6] Yet Wagner's interests in his career and in music and drama in general were such that he never again had time to regain his past facility in ancient Greek. During his time at the Dresden court, he resorted to collecting classical authors in translation. Westernhagen lists both Greek and Roman works in the composer's library, including Aeschylus' tragedies, Aristophanes' comedies, Aristotle's complete works, Demosthenes' orations, Euripides' plays, Herodotus' history, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Horace's complete works, Livius's history of Rome, Pindar's works, Plato's collected works, Plutarch, Sophocles' tragedies, Tacitus's complete annals and histories, Thucydides' works, Virgil's poems and the *Aeneid,* Xenophon's essays, and even Julius Caesar's memoirs.[7] Wagner's Bayreuth collection also included a wide assortment of classical texts, as can be gathered from numerous entries in Cosima's diaries. For example, on 18 November 1874, she recorded that Wagner was reading *Oedipus rex* by Sophocles in an edition that included the original and a parallel translation, comparing as

[5] GS 9, 296.

[6] ML, 171.

[7] Aristotle's works are found in Minna Wagner's list but were not with the collection when Westernhagen made his catalog. Also missing was Voss's translation of the *Iliad*; however, Wagner had another copy of this bound with the *Odyssey,* which was found with the rest of his books. (An extra copy of Voss's version of the latter was also found, suggesting that, in this case at least, Minna's list was indeed probably correct.) To supplement this reading material, Wagner also had a copy of Droysen's two-volume *Geschichte der Hellenismus* (1836 and 1843) and Gibbon's massive *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in the German translation by Sporschil (1840).

he went along. Afterwards, he engaged his wife in a discussion of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.[8]

Countless ideas central to Wagner's thinking derived from classical models, especially the Greeks. Among these are his previously noted general interest in mythology and tragedy, the inspiration for his goal of ideal festival presentations of his works in a special communal theater as opposed to one intended only for the upper-class, and the idea of arranging the *Ring* into a cycle of music dramas, which Michael Ewans logically traces to the only tenable source, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, a work Wagner mentions studying in 1847 in *Mein Leben*, noting his "ideas about the significance of drama, and especially the theater itself, were decisively moulded by … impressions" of the works of Aeschylus.[9] Wagner also expressed himself openly on the issue of the place of art in society in both practical and aesthetic senses, again demonstrating the influence of the ancients. However, the main issue he derived from his studies of classical thought was that of a synthesis of the various branches of the arts. Restoring the interrelations between the arts he supposed the ancients to have enjoyed was of constant concern to Wagner as a composer for the theater and ultimately led to his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[10]

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[8] CTa, 805.

[9] ML, 342-43.

[10] That Wagner was not the first to have ideas along this line did not escape his attention. However, there is no evidence that he initially engaged in his approach to music and drama due to any impetus other than his own idealistic views of what he thought the ancients must have enjoyed. He gained a sketchy knowledge of late Renaissance and early Baroque endeavors along the same lines only as his own career progressed. Because these were not formative influences in his decision to attempt a synthesis of the arts, a discussion of Wagner's consideration of the early development of opera will be delayed until the section on Baroque music in the present study.

It would be difficult to cite a writing of any significant length, either formal or informal, by Wagner that did not mention or allude to ancient Greece in some fashion. Like other issues with which he concerned himself, references to classical antiquity recur regularly throughout his life. As noted previously, early in *Mein Leben*, Wagner traced his fascination with Greek culture to the time of his schooling as a child. Fittingly, in the last days of his life in February 1883, he was still discussing Aeschylus.[11] In the interim, several of his essays dealt prominently with classical antiquity, particularly the issue of the collective effect of the arts, an idea that first seems to have occurred to him in the Dresden period, not surprisingly, considering the reading material he had surrounded himself with there.

Although Wagner could not have taken any direct influences from ancient Greek music as it was no longer extant, it would not have served his purposes even had that been possible. Since the sources of his works predominantly came from his own national Germanic heritage, Wagner would have had no reason to refer to any more ancient musical style. Instead, he drew on his understanding of Greek ideas about music and drama in developing his own ideas. Nonetheless, his various discussions of Greek music do suggest he had more than a passing knowledge of what constituted its basic style as understood by nineteenth-century musicologists. At least by the time he began acquiring his second library he would have had ample sources at his disposal containing discussions of Hellenic music and some of its theoretical foundations.

[11] CTb, 1010. This entry is in Daniela's hand. The dating of some of the remarks in her entry is not clear, as she skips back over the last few days of Wagner's life, filling in details she remembered but her mother had neglected to record.

In addition to the direct ancient source of Plutarch, which of course does not divulge many technical details, Westphal's *Geschichte der alten und mittelalterlichen Musik* and especially Reissmann's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* would have provided Wagner with discussions of many of the elements he alluded to in discussing ancient music. Reissmann touches on not only such technical topics as the *tonoi* and interval species but also includes a discussion of the Greater Perfect System of ancient Greek theorists in the first volume of his work. Here Wagner could appreciate the progress the Greeks had made especially in describing the harmonic and melodic phenomena they observed. His reference to Pythagoras' experiments in his *Beethoven* essay (written 20 July to 11 September 1870) amply demonstrates Wagner's regard for the topics the Greeks pondered, as noted below. Indeed, their fundamental interest in the wider repercussions of these natural phenomena he cites signified the considerable debt he owed them in the formulation of his own ideal of a *Gesamtkunstwerk.*

In the last of his reform efforts for the Dresden court ensembles, Wagner included in his "Entwurf zur Organisation eines deutschen National-Theaters für das Königreich Sachsen" ["Plan for the Organization of a German National Theater for the Kingdom of Saxony"] (completed 11 May 1848; delivered 18 May in person to the court's cabinet) the argument that

> In der theatralischen Kunst vereinigen sich, mit mehrer oder minderer Betheiligung, sämmtliche Künste zu einem so unmittelbaren Eindruck auf die Öffentlichkeit, wie ihn keine der übrigen Künste für sich allein hervorzubringen vermag. Ihr Wesen ist Vergesellschaftung mit Bewahrung des vollsten Rechtes der Individualität.[12]

[12] GS 2, 235.

> [In theatrical art, all other arts, with greater or lesser participation, unite in such a direct impression on the public in a way that none of the arts could produce by itself. Its essence is socialization, with retention of the complete rights of individuality.]

This concept was the starting point for Wagner's subsequent theoretical musings on his own artistic efforts. In its first appearance here, Wagner leaves the source of these remarks uncredited, but he does cite a dictum of Kaiser Joseph I, which attributes an almost Hellenistic importance to the drama: "*Das Theater soll keine andere Aufgabe haben, als auf die Veredelung des Geschmackes und der Sitten zu wirken.*" ["*The theater has no other task than to bring about the improvement of taste and manners.*"][13]

Revolution and Art

Wagner commemorated the events of 1849, the year of his forced exile in Switzerland, in several essays: *Die Kunst und Revolution* [*Art and Revolution*] (completed late July 1849), "Das Künstlertum der Zukunft" ["The Artistry of the Future"] (notes for an abandoned article, 1849-50), and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* [*The Artwork of the Future*] (completed 4 November 1849). Two themes are obvious from the titles alone: (1) the idea of revolution and the possibility for improvement in the future

[13] GS 2, 237; cf. Friedrich Schiller, "Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet" ["The Theater Considered as a Moral Institution"] (public lecture, given 26 June 1784 in Mannheim): "Die Schaubühne ist mehr als jede andere öffentliche Anstalt des Staats eine Schule der praktischen Weisheit, ein Wegweiser durch das bürgerliche Leben, ein unfehlbarer Schlüssel zu den geheimsten Zugängen der menschlichen Seele." ["The theater is more than every other public institution of the state a school for practical wisdom, a guide through civic life, an unfailing key to the most secret entrances to the human soul."] in *Schiller's sämmtliche Werke in zwölf Banden* (Stuttgart und Tübigen: Verlag der J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1838), Bd. 10, 74. (This edition was in Wagner's Dresden library, with volume 5 missing; see Westernhagen, 103.)

that comes with it and (2) the significance of high art ("Kunst") in this process. Whereas the impetus behind his new thinking was covert in Dresden, including the possibility of reforming the court ensembles, now it is clearly in the service of an idealized art, which Wagner admits can only exist in the future. His point of departure in the first of these essays is still ancient Greek drama, observing that the European artistic tradition is necessarily connected to the "*art of the Greeks*," as noted at the opening of this chapter.[14]

To begin, Wagner cites the Apollonian derivation of art and explains how all its various aspects were united in one common goal:

> So sah ihn [Apollon] der Athener, wenn alle Triebe seines schönen Leibes, seines rastlosen Geistes ihn zur Wiedergeburt seines eigenen Wesens durch den idealen Ausdruck der Kunst hindrängten; wenn die Stimme, voll und tönend, zum Chorgesang sich erhob, um zugleich des Gottes Thaten zu singen und den Tänzern den schwungvollen Takt zu dem Tanze zu geben, der in anmuthiger und kühner Bewegung jene Thaten selbst darstellte; wenn er auf harmonisch geordneten Säulen das edle Dach wölbte, die weiten Halbkreise des Amphitheaters über einander reihte, und die sinnigen Anordnungen der Schaubühne entwarf. Und so sah ihn, den herrlichen Gott, der von Dionysos, begeisterte tragische Dichter, wenn er allen Elementen der üppig aus dem schönsten menschlichen Leben, ohne Geheiß, von selbst, und aus innerer Naturnothwendigkeit aufgesproßten Künste, das kühne, bindende Wort, die erhabene dichterische Absicht zuwies, die sie alle wie in einen Brennpunkt vereinigte, um das höchste erdenkliche Kunstwerk, das *Drama*, hervorzubringen.[15]
>
> [Thus, the Athenians saw him (Apollo), when all the limbs of his beautiful body and his restless spirit forced him to a renewed birth of his essence through the ideal expression of art; when voices, full and resounding, were raised in choral song, at the same time in order to sing of the god's deeds and to give enthusiastic measure to the dancers, who portrayed the same deeds themselves in their fetching and daring movement; when he erected the noble arch on harmonically ordered columns, which ranged around each other in the broad half-circle of the amphitheater, and drafted the careful arrangement of the stage. Thus, the glorious god was seen by the tragic poet, who was moved by Dionysus, when he (the poet) united, as if to bring into focus, without bidding, but of his own will, all the sensuous elements — those from the most beautiful human life and from the internal necessity of nature infused with the arts — to the powerful, binding words, which are allotted to the lofty poetic intention, in order to create the greatest artwork thinkable, *drama*.]

[14] Nattiez also covers many of these details, with different emphases; see especially Ch. 1, "The Theoretical Essays of 1849 to 1851," pp. 12ff.

[15] GS 3, 10-11.

Thus, Wagner accounts for the individual roles of the muses in creating drama: music in the form of choral song, dance (or movement) to depict the same subject as that song, and finally poetry written under the direct influence of these other arts. The first two of these constituents in this synthesis were almost instinctual for the ancients, while the last was provided for by Apollo himself as he created the theater. Also, note how Wagner characterizes this action as being "harmonically ordered," another tribute to the god's power over music itself, and an overt reference to this important topic in his writings.

Even though this metaphorical use of musical terms may seem isolated here, it is in fact a hallmark of Wagner's writing. In the next paragraph, he continues by noting that drama realistically recorded all the deeds of gods and men, including sufferings and joys, "als ewiger Rhythmus, ewige Harmonie aller Bewegung, alles Daseins" ["as eternal rhythm, eternal harmony of all motions, of all existence"], making it a reflection of life.[16] This great art was only checked when Greek society itself fell into decline, and then "löste sich auch das große Gesammtkunstwerk der Tragödie in die einzelnen, ihm inbegriffenen Kunstbestandtheile auf" ["the great *Gesamtkunstwerk* of tragedy dissolved into the individual artistic ingredients that had been included"].[17]

Wagner maintains that this lost unified artwork was already in decline by the time Sophocles overtook his predecessor Aeschylus in popularity. The conservative, poetic art of the latter's *Oresteia* was displaced by the often more political dramas of the younger dramatist. Eventually, these too were displaced by the comedies of Aristophanes. By

[16] GS 3, 11.
[17] GS 3, 12.

Roman times, all of this had devolved into the blood sport of the coliseum, and the public art of the Greeks, which was like a religious festival, had become nothing more than popular entertainment. Reflecting the zeitgeist, Wagner asserts that Greek drama could not be reborn, as shown by Renaissance efforts, but instead must be born anew as the artwork of the future that can develop only out of revolution. Ideally, this would allow all mankind to unite and thus clear the stage for a new universal artwork to appear, with the collective efforts of all artists in each of the separate branches of art reunited in drama.

Several of these ideas occupied Wagner over the next months, as reflected in notes he made for an abandoned article, refining the logic of his previous argument to emphasize what were becoming its essential features for him:

> Die *Musik* auf der Grenzscheide zwischen Tanz und Sprache, Empfindung und Gedanke. Sie vermittelt beide in der antiken Lyrik, wo das Lied, das gesungene Wort zugleich den Tanz befeuerte und Maß gab. Tanz — und — Lied; Rhythmus — und Melodie: so steht sie verbindend und zugleich abhängig zwischen den äußersten Fähigkeiten des Menschen, der sinnlichen Empfindung und dem geistigen Denken. Das *Meer* trennt und verbindet, — so die Musik.[18]
>
> [*Music* on the borderline between dance and speech, feeling and thought. She arranges them both in the ancient lyric, where song, the sung word, gave fire and measure at the same time to dance. Dance — and — song; rhythm — and melody: thus it (music) stands binding and at the same time dependent between the outermost faculties of man, sensuous feeling and spiritual thought. The *ocean* severs and unites, — just as does music.]

Here music takes the lead as the means of unification of speech/lyric, dance/rhythm, and song/melody. This rethinking of priorities is evident in the much more thorough and systematic study Wagner undertook towards the end of 1849 in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. Again, drama was seen as the ultimate outcome of a reunification of the arts,

[18] "Das Künstlertum der Zukunft," in *Richard Wagner: Dichtungen und Schriften*, Jubiläumsausgabe, ed. Dieter Borchmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1983), vol. 5, 253-54.

but this new synthesis includes even more discussion of important aspects of music, particularly melody and harmony in their various manifestations, albeit now directly derived from nature and not from any intermediary action of the Greeks.

Wagner creates the analogy "Wie der Mensch sich zur Natur verhält, so verhält die Kunst sich zum Menschen." ["As man is related to nature, so art is related to man."][19] Man and art both arise out of necessity. The art man creates is also of necessity for the people, a communal product. As the artist derives his art from his sense-driven observations of nature, it stands to reason the artwork itself is natural and thus appeals to others. Again, art is based on life. However, in this formulation, the emphasis is placed directly on the human aspect, not any sort of divine inspiration or guidance. It is the artist's own senses that are responsible for the three branches of art Wagner now codifies: "*Tanzkunst, Tonkunst,* und *Dichtkunst*" ["*the arts of dance, tone,* and *poetry*"]. Yet he refers to them again as the three muses, reaffirming the ancient sources of his ideas.[20] Dance is the most realistic and natural of the three as it re-presents the movements of man in rhythm and is thus a mimetic art. Poetry required some more contrived developments from its practitioners as it moved from simple folk poems to the epic and on towards drama. This particular genre is again given priority for its ability to reunite the arts in a common goal. Wagner also includes a discussion of the merits of drama in the time of the ancients, before moving on to discuss the various attempts in music history to create a

[19] GS 3, 42.
[20] GS 3, 67.

new synthesis of the arts. Of far more interest in the present context is his discussion of the third branch of art, *Tonkunst*.

As his thoughts moved more and more in this direction towards music, he elaborated in ever-increasing detail about various aspects of it. The passage cited above from his notes is echoed directly in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*: "Das Meer trennt und verbindet die Länder: so trennt und verbindet die Tonkunst die zwei Gegensätze menschlicher Kunst, die Tanz- und Dichtkunst." ["The ocean separates and connects land: so does music separate and connect the two opposites of human art, the arts of dance and poetry."][21] Now music is accounted for as an essential element in the synthesis of the arts and thus in the creation of drama. Wagner describes music's importance in dealing with her two sister arts:

> … führt die Tanzkunst ihr eigenes Bewegungsgesetz der Tonkunst zu, so weist diese ihr es als seelenvoll sinnlich verkörperten Rhythmus zum Maaße veredelter, verständlicher Bewegung wieder an; erhält sie von der Dichtkunst die sinnvolle Reihe scharfgeschnittener, durch Bedeutung und Maaß verständnißvoll vereinter Wörter als gedankenreich sinnlichen Körper zur Festigung ihres unendlich flüssigen Tonelementes, so führt sie ihr diese gesetzvolle Reihe mittelbar vorstellender, zu Bildern, noch nicht aber zu unmittelbarem, nothwendig wahren Ausdruck verdichteter, gedankhaft-sehnsüchtiger Sprachlaute, als Gefühls-unmittelbare, unfehlbar rechtfertigende und erlösende *Melodie* wieder zu.[22]
>
> [… if dance brings its own rule of motion to music, so then this (music) conveys back to it (dance) motion, ennobled and understanding, as soulful, meaningful, and embodied rhythm in measure; if she (music) receives from poetry a sensible series of incisive, intelligible words, united through their meaning and measure as a thought-provoking, meaningful body for the strengthening of her fluid tonal elements, so then she (music) conveys back to it (poetry) a law-bound series of thoughtful and yearning speech sounds, which are indirectly and symbolically — thus not entirely indirectly — strengthened through necessarily honest expression into a direct representation of feeling: infallibly vindicated and redeeming *melody*.]

Music bestows regular rhythm on dance, and it bestows melody on poetry, both of these as a means to make their recipients more intelligible. Yet only music has the power to

[21] GS 3, 81.
[22] GS 3, 82.

grant this gift and that only with the symbiotic cooperation and input of its sister arts. Furthermore, rhythm and melody are but smaller parts of music, and Wagner sees them as its most obvious, surface features at that. More meaningful is the power of harmony.

Wagner admits that he would be hard pressed to derive harmony from the same natural causes that brought forth melody or even the other arts themselves. Harmony is not a mirror of the physical movements of the body nor is it based on the necessary representational logic of language. Instead, "sie ist wie eine dem Menschen wahrnehmbare, nicht aber begreifliche Naturmacht." ["It is like a natural force men perceive but cannot comprehend."][23] At the same time, Wagner resorts to his previous analogy to explain what harmony is, now with a modest aesthetic statement, in a passage that sounds surprisingly proto-Schenkerian:

> Die Harmonie wächst von unten nach oben als schnurgerade Säule aus der Zusammenfügung und Übereinanderschichtung verwandter Tonstoffe. Unaufhörlicher Wechsel solcher immer neu aufsteigenden und neben einander gefügten Säulen macht die einzige Möglichkeit absoluter harmonischer Bewegung nach der Breite zu aus. Das Gefühl nothwendiger Sorge für die Schönheit dieser Bewegung nach der Breite ist dem Wesen der absoluter Harmonie fremd; sie kennt nur die Schönheit des Farbenlichtwechsels ihrer Säulen, nicht aber die Anmuth ihrer zeitlich wahrnehmbaren Anordnung, — denn diese ist das Werk des Rhythmus.[24]
>
> [Harmony rises from below to the heights like straight columns due to the interplay and layering of related tonal material. Incessant changes of such ever-newly rising and interconnecting columns create the unique possibility of absolute harmonic motion according to their length (in time). The feeling of necessary concern for the beauty of this motion according to length is quite foreign to the essence of absolute harmony; it recognizes only the beauty of the change of colors of its columns, not the attractiveness of its chronologically perceptible ordering — for this is the work of rhythm.]

Harmony was the element that seemed to have been the most theoretical, rather than practical, for the ancients. Noting the acoustic nature of intervals for theoretical

[23] GS 3, 87.
[24] GS 3, 86.

exegetics was of importance to Greek theorists; the use of harmony as a support for melody, as columns support an arch or otherwise, was not. That the Greeks were not compelled to rely on it out of the same necessity that bound lyric poetry and rhythm together to create melody as a means of expression allows Wagner to delay further discussion of the topic of harmony for later developments in Western music, as noted below. Here, however, Wagner's description clearly implies harmonic bases for melodic motion ("the beauty of the change of colors"), as in the overtone series, rather than harmony supporting melody as one would find in later periods. The fundamental concept of harmonic progression is not even considered in this earliest stage of its development.

Although in many details *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* is an improvement or at least an elaboration on his more sketchy previous efforts, it still represents something of a miscalculation by the composer in that Wagner still places most of his emphasis on drama itself in the form of the plot or argument in its most basic form. He refers to this as the central purpose for creating a new revolutionary artwork:

> Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft ist ein gemeinsames, und nur aus einem gemeinsamen Verlangen kann es hervorgehen. Dieses Verlangen, das wir bisher nur, als der Wesenheit der einzelnen Kunstarten nothwendig eigen, *theoretisch* dargestellt haben, ist *praktisch* nur in der *Genossenschaft aller Künstler* denkbar, und die *Vereinigung* aller Künstler nach Zeit und Ort, und *zu einem bestimmten Zwecke*, bildet dieser Genossenschaft. Dieser bestimmte Zweck ist das *Drama*, zu dem sie sich alle vereinigen, um in der Betheiligung am ihm ihre besondere Kunstart zu der höchsten Fülle ihres Wesens zu entfalten, in dieser Entfaltung sich gemeinschaftlich alle zu durchdringen, und als Frucht der Durchdringung eben als lebendige, sinnlich gegenwärtige Drama zu erzeugen. Das, was Allen ihre Theilnahme ermöglicht, ja was sie nothwendig macht und was ohne diese Theilnahme gar nicht zur Erscheinung gelangen könnte, ist aber der eigentliche Kern des Drama's, *die dramatische Handlung*.
>
> Die dramatische Handlung ist, als innerlichste Bedingung des Drama's, zugleich dasjenige Moment im ganzen Kunstwerk, welches das allgemeinste *Verständniß* desselben versichert. Unmittelbar dem (vergangenen oder gegenwärtigen) *Leben* entnommen, bildet sie gerade im dem Maaße das verständnißgebende Band mit dem Leben, als sie der Wahrheit des Lebens am getreuesten entspricht, das Verlangen desselben nach seinem Verständnisse am geeignetsten befriedigt. Die dramatische Handlung ist somit der *Zweig vom Baume des Lebens*, der unbewußt und unwillkürlich diesem entwachsen, nach der Gesetzen des Lebens geblüht hat und verblüht ist, nun aber, von ihm abgelöst, *in den Boden der Kunst gepflanzt* wird, um zu neuem, schönerem, unvergänglichen Leben aus ihm zu dem üppigen Baume zu erwachsen, der

> dem Baume des wirklichen Lebens seiner inneren, nothwendigen Kraft und Wahrheit nach vollkommen gleicht, dem Leben selbst gegenständlich geworden, diesem sein eigenes Wesen aber zur Anschauung bringt, das Unbewußtsein in ihm zum Bewußtsein von sich erhebt.[25]
>
> [The artwork of the future is a communal one, and it can only emerge from a common desire. This desire, which thus far we have presented in *theory* only as the necessarily proper epitome of the individual types of art, is conceivable in *practice* only through the *cooperation of all artists*, and the *union* of all artists according to time and place *to a definite purpose* demonstrates this cooperation. This definite purpose is *drama* in which they all will unite in order to display the essence of their various types of art to the absolute fullest by participating, to infuse each other through taking part together, and to produce as the fruit of this infusion nothing other than living, sensuous contemporary drama. That which was made possible for all by their participation, which was indeed created out of necessity, and which could not have possibly appeared without this cooperation is nothing but the actual kernel of drama, *the dramatic action*.
>
> As the innermost aspect of the drama, the dramatic action is also that very moment in the entire artwork which assures the most universal *understanding*. Taken directly from *life* (either past or present), it displays just so in its measure an enlightening bond with that life by corresponding most faithfully to the true nature of life, the desire to understand life thus being most appropriately satisfied. The dramatic action is in this respect a *branch of the tree of life*, which grows out of life unbeknownst and involuntarily, blooming and withering according to the laws of life. However, now it is trimmed and *planted in the ground that is art* in order to grow from it a new, more beautiful, eternal life in full bloom, which necessarily and absolutely resembles in its power and truth the true tree of the life in all its details, comes to represent life itself, but now stands as a symbol of life in its very existence, raising the unconscious in it to the conscious.]

If this singular dramatic action is taken up for portrayal by all artists so that it may grow into something representational, the means Wagner gives for this to happen are not made clear. Thinking specifically in terms of opera, it is not yet clear what part a librettist, composer, musicians, set and costume designers, and so forth would play, for example. It would seem that the central *sine qua non* in this description is nothing but the central thrust of the plot itself, not its textual or musical elaboration nor anything that might be added through performance, nor even the artist's intention for the meaning of a drama. If that were true, any drama, whether it be opera or a spoken play, could theoretically be judged solely on this limited, albeit fundamental, element, and not on what the artist

[25] GS 3, 162.

intended for the "kernel of the drama" to symbolize as elaborated through a myriad of other details.

The basic details of Wagner's formulation in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* — a communal artwork, relying on a variety of elements, having a definite purpose, featuring a central moment of "universal understanding," and reflecting life — are all to be found in Aristotle's *Poetics* (ca. 350 B.C.). Wagner may have modeled his own discussion on this ancient one, or he may merely have recalled it unwittingly. Either way, Wagner's descriptions echo those of Aristotle who maintained that in

> Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also in Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and most flute playing and lyre playing, … the means with them as a whole are rhythm, language, and harmony — used, however, either singly or in certain combinations.[26]

Some arts use these basic elements in combination, while others use them in succession. Like Wagner, Aristotle directly relates melody to harmony – albeit in a more limited sense, to be sure – as related aspects of the same art, one more applicable in certain spheres than the other. The coming together of disparate elements is a key element of Aristotle's explanation, as is further amplified by his more precise definition of what constitutes a tragedy:

> A tragedy … is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. Here by "language with pleasurable accessories" I mean that with rhythm and harmony or song superadded; and by "the kinds separately" I mean that some portions are worked out with verse only, and others in turn with song.
>
> As they act the stories, it follows that in the first place the Spectacle (or stage appearance of the actors) must be some part of the whole; and in the second Melody and Diction, these two being the means of their imitation…. There are six parts consequently of every tragedy, as a whole

[26] Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *The Pocket Aristotle*, trans. and ed. W. D. Ross (New York: Washington Square Press, 1958), 342.

> (that is) of such or such quality, viz., a Fable or Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, and Melody …
>
> The most important of the six is the combination of the incidents of the story. Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of person but of action and life, of happiness and misery…. it is the action, i.e., Fable or Plot, that is the end purpose of the tragedy; and the end is everywhere the chief thing.[27]

Wagner's emphasis on a unified dramatic action ("the actual kernel of the drama") may have arisen out of a not uncommon misunderstanding of Aristotle's explanation of the unity of action necessary in drama:

> The truth is that, just as in the other imitative arts one imitation is always of one thing, so in poetry the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole.[28]

Aristotle is careful to allow for what we recognize as episodes in a plot, but the overriding central action is very close to Wagner's formulation "the innermost aspect of the drama, the dramatic action" which he characterized in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* as that singular moment "in the entire artwork which ensures the most universal *understanding*." Aristotle had already explained this last phenomenon in *Poetics* as well by noting that poetry

> is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do — which is the aim of poetry …[29]

Not surprisingly, Wagner moved away from this focus on the dramatic action and paid far more attention to the musical aspects in Part One of his next effort, *Oper und Drama*. He also moved away from a singular all-important dramatic moment to discuss the

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[27] Aristotle, 348-50.
[28] Aristotle, 352-53.
[29] Aristotle, 353.

importance of multiple significant moments in the course of a drama.[30] As Thomas Grey has pointed out, Wagner's own vague descriptions in Part Three of *Oper und Drama* of his technique of assigning musical motivic material to distinct dramatic moments certainly seems to require a multiplicity of such moments. Furthermore, the musical motives ought to arise out of a reciprocal relationship with dramatic motives, meaning for the music to have any sort of distinct meaning it must reflect the drama.[31]

In the essays examined thus far that stem from the immediately post-revolutionary period, Wagner was clearly trying to come to grips with the changes he intended to institute in future works. This would continue the trend he had started in Dresden, moving away from the traditional style of *Rienzi* and towards increasing freedom, especially in terms of formal structures, in *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin* (premiered on 28 August 1850 in Weimar). The common assumption — one that cannot be entirely discounted, although it is somewhat of an over-simplification — is that Wagner had to go through all of these things for himself before he could set the

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[30] There can be little doubt that for Wagner, who cast all of his mature music dramas in three acts (with the exception of the *Vorabend* to the *Ring*, *Das Rheingold*), the concept of a single, all-important action was theoretical at best. While contemplating what would eventually become *Parsifal* as he worked on the last act of *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner wrote to Mathilde Wesendonck (1828-1902) on 30 May 1859, "I cannot choose to work on such a broad scale as Wolfram was able to do: I have to compress everything into *three* climactic situations of violent intensity, so that the work's profound and ramified content emerges clearly and distinctly; for *my* art consists in working and representing things in *this* way" (*Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 460).

Also, on 16 January 1871, Cosima recorded that while reflecting on the soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient's interpretation of Romeo in Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* (1830) that he had seen in 1834 in Leipzig, Wagner said, "That really made me feel that everything hangs on the dramatic action; all the classicality (even quartets sound like so much squeaking!) crumbled in my eyes at the sight of this human warmth. In fact the libretto is not at all badly done, and it had its effect on me when I decided to reduce *Tristan* to three love scenes" (CTa, 322). Here, "dramatic action" definitely allows for plurality and thus clearly implies more that it did in 1849 when Wagner used the same term in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.

[31] Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose*, 319ff.

libretto for his new project, *Siegfrieds Tod*.[32] That he chose to record and share any of his own artistic ideas and goals with the public was merely another aspect of Dahlhaus's previously mentioned description of the composer trying to make his intentions better understood, combined with more than a little desire to ensure he was not forgotten during his exile as he wrestled with the issues he saw before him as a composer of admittedly ambitious musical works for the stage. This also plays into Wagner's own explanation, which was given in several different places and which is also noted by Robert Bailey. Wagner saw little hope of having such an ambitious and original work produced,[33] at least in the immediate future if not ever, as the project grew from a single work to a series of operas. This would have been especially true had the sketches from 1850 displayed as radical a departure from his previous works as the final version of *Götterdämmerung* eventually demonstrated.[34] Even though Wagner later maintained he had attempted to sketch *Siegfrieds Tod* only after having gone into more detail about musical matters in *Oper und Drama*, he actually began his largest treatise after having made little progress at the composition.[35] In this respect, then, it is clear that Wagner did need to revisit some of the issues he had already addressed and flesh them out with a more musically oriented historiography and a more detailed theoretical framework before he could proceed.

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[32] See for example Jack Madison Stein, *Richard Wagner and the Synthesis of the Arts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960; reprint, 1973), 67-68. See also Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the *Ring* and Its Evolution," *19th-Century Music* 1/1 (July, 1977): 49.

[33] ML, 459 and 464-65; see also GS 7, 118; and *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 232-34.

[34] See Robert Bailey, "Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfrieds Tod*," in *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, ed. Harold Powers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 459-94. A complete transcription of the 1850 sketch is included there, pp. 485-94.

[35] Bailey, "Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfrieds Tod*," 461-62.

Harmony between Words and Music

In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner reformulates his arguments in several ways with respect to issues under consideration: (1) Greek references are now removed predominantly to the sections dealing almost exclusively with drama (even when these are presented in the context of discussions of opera), (2) folk song replaces Greek tragedy as the impetus for creating a new music drama, and (3) the main argument is no longer for a trinitarian unification in the arts, but a binary synthesis of words and music instead.[36] In a way, this is a more satisfying approach, both in terms of logic for the reader and in terms of the needs of the author/composer. At the same time, Wagner is obviously a little uncomfortable with this new arrangement, especially in subordinating Greek influences to the degree he has resorted to here. As Nattiez points out, even though for practical reasons Wagner placed the emphasis in his historical overview on more recent developments in opera, he did not entirely relinquish his classical antecedents:[37]

> Das Besondere der griechischen Bildung ist, daß sie der rein leiblichen Erscheinung des Menschen eine so bevorzugende Aufmerksamkeit zuwandte, daß wir diese als die Basis aller griechischen Kunst anzusehen haben. Das Lyrische und das dramatische Kunstwerk war die durch die Sprache ermöglichte Vergeistigung der Bewegung dieser leiblichen Erscheinung, und die monumentale bildende Kunst endlich ihre unverholene Vergötterung. Zur Ausbildung der Tonkunst fühlten sich die Griechen nur so weit gedrungen, als sie zur Unterstützung der Gebärde zu dienen hatte, deren Inhalt die Sprache an sich schon melodisch ausdrückte.[38]
>
> [The particular thing of Greek culture is that it devoted such a preferential attention to the purely corporal appearance of man, which we have regarded as the basis of all Greek art. The lyric and dramatic artwork were the spiritualization made possible by speech of the movement of

[36] Nattiez, 16.
[37] Nattiez, 16.
[38] GS 4, 104.

> this corporeal appearance, and monumental plastic art was in the end its overt deification. The Greeks did not feel compelled to develop the art of music, which served as support for gestures, already melodically expressing their contents in speech.]

Now the Greeks are seen as a somewhat primitive people, using music only as a means to emphasize gesture and only melodically at that. Less than a decade later, Wagner expressly removed harmony from any consideration of music in Hellenic culture when revisiting this topic in *"Zukunftsmusik"* (completed by 13 [?] September 1860; published in 1861): "Die dem Althertume gänzlich unbekannte Harmonie …" ["Harmony which was entirely unknown to the ancients …"][39] No longer did he consider Greek experiments demonstrating the overtone series; instead, they now were practitioners of a singularly melodic art for him, as already implied in *Oper und Drama*. Their interest in gesture, corporeality, and thus dance itself — the art downplayed in Wagner's new formulation — is "particular," perhaps even with a little suggestion of narcissism. The same sort of superficiality is obviously implied in their treatment of music as well, amplifying his position in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.

In his discussion of the representation of society in opera, Wagner again cites the example of Greek tragedy in *Oper und Drama*. The chorus represents society and participates in the drama, allowing the audience to feel that they too in turn are involved in the action. This sensation is also amplified by the fact that the hero has almost literally stepped out of the chorus and is himself a member of society. "Die griechische Tragödie faßte in Chor und Helden das Publikum und das Kunstwerk zusammen …" ["Greek

[39] GS 7, 105.

tragedy bound together the public and the artwork in the chorus and heroes …"][40] In this respect, Wagner examines Greek sources in a more political light than as practical guides for reconstituting drama. It is in this vein that he cites the story of Oedipus at length as a sociopolitical parable. This is an obvious attempt to mollify the revolutionary tone of his theorizing, yet still allowing for the power of art to nullify the state: "Für die Kunst, um die es bei dieser Untersuchung uns einzig zu thun war, liegt in der Vernichtung des Staates nun folgendes, über Alles wichtige Moment." ["For art, which was our only concern in this investigation, the destruction of the state is the most important following moment."][41] With a classical pedigree behind his logic, Wagner achieved a balance between his previous radicalism and his present revisionist tendencies.

Given its vast scope, *Oper und Drama* also provided the venue for Wagner to refine and combine some of his previous metaphorical discussions of the nature of melody and harmony. In sublimating the Greek imagery of *Die Kunst und Revolution* to that of the water he had used in both the incomplete "Das Künstlertum der Zukunft" and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft,* Wagner completes an arch in these earlier writings, moving from the highly metaphorical to the more concrete, all the while melding disparate metaphors into one. Now he can explain the two elements of music most important to him in conjunction with a discussion of poetry and drama, while relegating movement to a separate, more practical sphere of discussion in *Oper und Drama*. The Apollonian

[40] GS 3, 268. Curiously, and most likely intentionally, this could also be translated appropriately as "Greek tragedy *summarized* the public and the artwork in the chorus and heroes …"

[41] GS 4, 67.

choral ode and architectonic "harmonically ordered pillars" of the amphitheater are given greater emphasis as Wagner comments that

> Die Melodie, wie sie auf der Oberfläche der Harmonie erscheint, ist für ihren entscheidenden rein musikalischen Ausdruck einzig aus dem von unten her wirkenden Grunde der Harmonie bedingt: wie sie sich selbst als horizontale Reihe kundgiebt, hängt sie durch eine senkrechte Kette mit diesem Grunde zusammen. Diese Kette ist der harmonische Akkord, der als eine vertikale Reihe nächst verwandter Töne aus dem Grundtone nach der Oberfläche zu aufsteigt. Das Mitklingen dieses Akkordes giebt dem Tone der Melodie erst die besondere Bedeutung, nach welcher er zu einem unterschiedenen Momente des Ausdruckes als einzig bezeichnend verwendet wurde. So wie der aus dem Grundtone bestimmte Akkord dem einzelnen Tone der Melodie erst seinen besonderen Ausdruck giebt — indem ein und derselbe Ton auf einem anderen ihm verwandten Grundtone eine ganz andere Bedeutung für den Ausdruck erhält —, so bestimmt sich jeder Fortschritt der Melodie aus einer Tonart in die andere ebenfalls nur nach dem wechselnden Grundton, der den Leitton der Harmonie, als solchen, aus sich bedingt. Die Gegenwart dieses Grundtones, und des aus ihm bestimmten harmonischen Akkordes, ist vor dem Gefühle, welches die Melodie nach ihrem charakteristischen Ausdrucke erfassen soll, unerläßlich. Die Gegenwart der Grundharmonie heißt aber: *Miterklingen* derselben. Das Miterklingen der Harmonie zu der Melodie überzeugt das Gefühl erst vollständig von dem Gefühlsinhalte der Melodie, die ohne dieses Miterklingen dem Gefühle Etwas unbestimmt ließe; nur aber bei vollster Bestimmtheit aller Momente des Ausdruckes bestimmt sich auch das Gefühl schnell und unmittelbar zur unwillkürlichen Theilnahme, und volle Bestimmtheit des Ausdruckes heißt aber wiederum nur: *vollständigste Mittheilung all' seiner nothwendigen Momente an die Sinne.*[42]
>
> [Melody, as it appears on the surface of harmony, is stipulated in its decisive, purely musical expression only by the upwardly acting foundation of harmony: as it announces itself as a horizontal row, so is it connected by a vertical chain to this foundation. This chain is the harmonic chord, which rises up to the surface as a vertical row of related notes based on the fundamental note. The resonance of this chord first gives particular meaning to a note of the melody, according to which it (the note) was employed solely to characterize a decisive moment of expression. Just as the chord determined by the fundamental note first gives the individual note of the melody its particular expression — while the selfsame note over another related fundamental note would receive an entirely different meaning of expression — so does it determine each motion of the melody from one key to others, likewise only according to the changing fundamental note, which thus prescribes the leading tone of the harmony. The presence of this fundamental note, and the harmonic chord prescribed by it, is indispensable for feeling, which melody should include according to its characteristic expression. However, the presence of the fundamental harmony bids for *harmonic resounding* itself. The resounding of harmony to the melody first reinforces feeling completely from the emotional content of the melody, which without this resonance would leave something undetermined in feeling; however, now with the complete prescription of all moments of expression thus also is feeling quickly and immediately determined in involuntary sympathy, and a complete prescription of expression bids therefore only *complete communication of all its necessary moments to the sense*.]

Unlike in his previous efforts, the importance of harmony as a foundation for melody is clear now. The water imagery has replaced that of ancient architecture, but the

[42] GS 4, 156.

relationship between the two can be traced back to the statement in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* quoted above: "Harmony rises from below to the heights like straight columns due to the interplay and layering of related tonal material."

Wagner uses this same image of water as a metaphor for melody and harmony throughout the Third Part of *Oper und Drama*. Harmony is likened to the depths of the ocean, representing the unknown. Melody is the surface of the water and reflects the poet's thoughts.

> Die Verwandtschaft der Töne ist aber die musikalische *Harmonie*, die wir hier zunächst nach ihrer Ausdehnung in der Fläche aufzufassen haben … Behalten wir jetzt die hier gemeinte *horizontale* Ausdehnung der Harmonie im Auge, so behalten wir uns ausdrücklich die allbestimmende Eigenschaft der Harmonie in ihrer *vertikalen* Ausdehnung zu ihrem Urgrunde für den entscheidenden Moment unserer Darstellung vor. Jene horizontale Ausdehnung, als Oberfläche der Harmonie, ist aber die Physiognomie derselben, die dem Auge des Dichters noch erkennbar ist: sie ist der Wasserspiegel, der dem Dichter noch sein eigenes Bild zurückgespiegelt, wie er dieß Bild zugleich auch dem beschauenden Auge Desjenigen, an den der Dichter sich mittheilen wollte, zuführt. Dieses Bild aber ist der in Wahrheit die verwirklichte Absicht des Dichters, — eine Verwirklichung, die dem Musiker wiederum nur möglich ist, wenn er aus der Tiefe des Meeres der Harmonie zu dessen Oberfläche auftaucht, auf der eben die entzückende Vermählung des zeugenden dichterischen Gedankens mit dem unendlichen Gebärungsvermögen der Musik gefeiert wird.
>
> Jenes wogende Spiegelbild ist die *Melodie*.[43]

> [The relationship of tones is however musical *harmony*, which we here first have to comprehend according to its surface expansion … If we now keep in sight the intended *horizontal* expansion of harmony, then we expressly reserve for ourselves the all-defining property of harmony in its *vertical* expansion to its fundamental basis for the decisive moment of our account. That horizontal expansion, as the surface of harmony, is its very self-same physiognomy, which is still recognizable in the poet's eye: it is the water's mirror surface that still reflects back to the poet his own image, just as at the same time he also conveys this image to the gazing eyes of those to whom he would convey it. However, this image is in truth the realized intent of the poet — a realization that is in turn possible only for the musician as he ascends from the depths of the sea of harmony to its surface, on which the rapturous marriage of the generative poetic thought to music's infinite ability to bear is celebrated.
>
> This surging mirror image is *melody*.]

The idea of melody as "auf der horizontale Oberfläche der Harmonie als Spiegelbild des dichterischen Gedankens erscheinende …" ["appearing as the mirror-

[43] GS 4, 141-42.

image of the poetic thought on the horizontal surface of harmony …"][44] hearkens back to the Platonic allegory of humankind being imprisoned in a cave filtering man's perceptions of reality. Indeed, the idea of a reflection or, more precisely, shadows of a supposed idea is already present in Plato's *Republic* (ca. 380 B.C.). In Chapter Seven, concerning education, the philosopher opines that humans do not see things as they really are but instead see only vague shadows of reality. It is only when allowed out of this cave of ignorance that man will first see

> the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day…. Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.[45]

The issue of whether Wagner was implying man had reached a new stage in his existence and was almost ready for the Truth or whether the composer merely borrowed the idea of mankind merely seeing projections of things rather than the objects themselves need not detain one from seeing the similarity in his approach to that of an ancient thinker.

Immediately after working on these essays and the full-length study *Oper und Drama*, Wagner turned his attention back to the Siegfried myth beginning in May 1851 and worked on a libretto for *Der junge Siegfried*, later to be renamed simply *Siegfried* when it took its place as the third work in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Further echoes of Plato are to be found in this poem. For example, in Act One, Scene One, Siegfried

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[44] GS 4, 142.

[45] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1901), 211.

confronts Mime with the evidence that the dwarf cannot be his parents, after Mime has claimed to be "Vater und Mutter zugleich" ["father and mother at the same time"]:

Das lüg'st du, garstiger Gauch! —	[You're lying, nasty wretch! —
Wie die Jungen den Alten gleichen,	That the young look like their elders
das hab' ich mir glücklich erseh'n.	I've already gathered, fortunately.
Nun kam ich zum klaren Bach:	When I came to a clear stream,
da erspäht' ich die Bäum'	There I espied the trees
und Thier' im Spiegel;	And the animals reflected;
Sonn' und Wolken,	Sun and clouds,
wie sie nur sind,	Just as they are,
im Glitzer erschienen sie gleich.	Appeared just so in the glimmering.
Da sah' ich denn auch	There I also then saw
mein eigen Bild;	My own image;
ganz anders als du	I thought it entirely
dünkt' ich mir da:	Different from you:
so glich wohl der Kröte	Just as like a toad is
ein glänzender Fisch;	To a shining fish,
doch kroch nie ein Fisch aus der Kröte![46]	But a fish never crept from a toad!]

This recalls Plato's freed man looking first at the images reflected in the water and then contemplating reality, just as Siegfried moves from comparing the images he sees in the water to the objects' physical realities, leading him to the realization that Mime cannot be his father.

Like a textual *Leitmotiv*, or what the Greeks would have recognized as verging on Homeric epithet, Wagner returns to this same imagery in Act Three, Scene Three of *Siegfried*, when the newly awakened Brünnhilde asks Siegfried

Sah'st du dein Bild	[Did you ever see your reflection
im klaren Bach?	In a clear stream?
Hat es dich Frohen erfreu't?	Did it make you glad?
Rührtest zur Woge	If you would upset the water
das Wasser du auf;	To become wavy,
zerflösse die klare	You'd mess up the clear
Fläche des Bach's:	Surface of the stream:
dein Bild säh'st du nicht mehr,	You'd see your image no more,
nur der Welle schwankend Gewog'.	Only the rolling eddy of the waves.
So berühre mich nicht,	So do not touch me,

[46] GS 6, 94.

trübe mich nicht![47] Do not muddy me!]

His response shows that he has not forgotten the example he had cited in the First Act and that he too understands the metaphor of her being a mirror image of himself but sees a different result coming from their interaction:

Ein herrlich Gewässer
wogt vor mir;
mit allen Sinnen
seh' ich nur sie,
die wonnig wogende Welle:
brach sie mein Bild,
so brenn' ich nun selbst,
sengende Gluth
in der Fluth zu kühlen;
ich selbst, wie ich bin,
spring' in den Bach:
o daß seine Wogen
mich selig verschlängen,
mein Sehnen schwänd' in der Fluth![48]

[A marvelous body of water
Surges before me;
With all my senses
I see it alone,
The blissful surging wave.
Since it shattered my images,
I myself am burning now
To cool my scorching ardor
In the waters;
I myself, just as I am,
Leap into the stream:
Oh, if its waves
Would joyfully embrace me,
My longing would be put out by the waters!]

Significantly, Siegfried underscores this as a moment of self-identification ("I myself, just as I am") even as he admits he is making a leap of faith, as it were, that Brünnhilde will accept him. This recalls directly what Plato had said in *Republic* of the newly enlightened man recognizing the sun: "not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is."

Despite the many changes that Wagner made in his libretto as what became *Der Ring des Nibelungen* evolved from two works, *Der junge Siegfried* and *Siegfrieds Tod*, to the eventual four, these passages required little reworking, unlike many other parts of the

[47] GS 6, 172.
[48] GS 6, 173.

text.[49] Furthermore, Wagner explicitly related Siegfried to a "Licht- oder Sonnengott" ["light- or sun-god"],[50] a sort of Germanic Apollo, in one of his earliest writings on the Nibelung subject, *Die Wibelungen: Weltgeschichte aus der Sage* [*The Wibelungs: World History from Saga*] (December 1848-February 1849; revised August-September 1849; published Leipzig, early 1850). He also left oblique traces of this idea in the earliest prose draft of the complete story he wished to tell, "Die Nibelungensage (Mythus)" ["The Nibelung Saga (Myth)"] (completed 4 October 1848), as well as more overt ones in the final version of the *Siegfried* libretto, none more obvious than the way Brünnhilde first addresses Siegfried by name:

O Siegfried! Siegfried!	[Oh, Siegfried! Siegfried!
Seliger Held!	Blessed hero!
Du Wecker des Lebens,	You awakener of life,
siegendes Licht![51]	Victorious light!]

The use of these textual motifs clearly owes their existence to the Greeks, especially Homer, with whose works Wagner became fascinated as a child it will be recalled. Cosima reports that over supper one evening in the summer of 1871, they discussed their "*indispensables* and classified them thus: Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles, the *Symposium*, *Don Quixote*, the whole of Shakespeare, and Goethe's *Faust*."[52] Is it surprising this list is heavily weighted towards classical authors? Previously that same year, they had discussed two seemingly unrelated topics: "Homer,

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[49] See Daniel Coren, "The Texts of Wagner's *Der junge Siegfried* and *Siegfried*," *19th-Century Music* 6/1 (summer 1982): 17-30, especially 18-19.

[50] GS 2, 119.

[51] GS 6, 167. Of course, this is soon after her initial evidently apostrophic greeting, "Heil dir, Sonne! / Heil dir, Licht! / Heil dir, leuchtender Tag!" ["Hail to you, sun! / Hail to you, light! / Hail to you, bright day!"] (GS 6, 166).

[52] CTa, 372; entry for Sunday, 4 June 1871.

[whose works were] only possible before the invention of writing, and Fidi, who will lose his extremely lively facial expressions once he begins to talk!"[53] Homer was a proto-author, one whose works were transmitted orally initially and which thus benefited from so-called Homeric epithets, expressions used as an *aide memoire*. And their son Siegfried, known as "Fidi," was a sort of proto-sapient human, one whose limited communications were transmitted through gesture, in this case facial expressions before he acquired his language skills. Clearly, for the Wagners the two ideas were not unrelated: literature without writing approached the realm of gesture in its presentation, and something would be lost in its translation to a written form, just as Siegfried's mode of communicating was far more expressive as facial gestures than it would be when limited to mere speech. Wagner's interest in gesture and mimesis was truly never far from his thoughts, and seeing his son's abilities the composer's thoughts again returned to the Greeks.

In fact, Wagner had codified his impressions on the birth of Siegfried on 6 June 1869 in his "Siegfried Idyll" (composed late November-December 1870; first performed 25 December 1870), a birthday present for his wife, referencing a Homeric epithet in the original title for the piece, "Tribschener Idylle mit Fidi-Vogelgesang und Orange-Sonnenaufgang, als symphonischer Geburtstagsgruß seiner Cosima dargebracht von Richard Wagner" ["Tribschen Idyll with Fidi-birdsong and Orange Sunrise, as a Symphonic Birthday Greeting Presented to His Cosima by Richard Wagner"]. Wagner explains the "Orange Sunrise" in Cosima's diary, as their housekeeper Vreneli announces

[53] CTa, 323; entry for Tuesday, 17 January 1871.

> "A *son* has arrived!" … Now R. went back into the *salon*: from the unconscious mother he heard little more, yet on the other hand he could clearly distinguish the lusty yells of the baby boy. With feelings of sublime emotion he stared in front of him, was then surprised by an incredibly beautiful, fiery glow which started to blaze with a richness of color never before seen, first on the orange wallpaper beside the bedroom door; it was then reflected in the blue jewel box containing my [Cosima's] portrait, so that this, covered by glass and set in a narrow gold frame, was transfigured in celestial splendor. The sun had just risen above the Rigi and was putting forth its first rays, proclaiming a glorious, sun-drenched day. R. dissolved into tears. Then to me, too, came from across the lake the sound of the early-morning Sunday bells ringing in Lucerne. He looked at the clock and noticed that his son had been born at 4 o'clock in the morning.[54]

Wagner is echoing one of the most famous Homeric epithets in both his recollection of the events of Siegfried's birth and the work he composed to commemorate the occasion as is made clear by a subsequent diary entry years later: "When we are alone, R. and I play the first half of the *Idyll* as a piano duet, then to rest. R. mentions the *eos krokopeplos, eos rhododaktylos* [dawn's saffron mantle, dawn's rosy fingers] in the springtime …"[55] Analogous repeated metaphors were certainly not mere happenstance in Wagner's essays either.

In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner includes a critique still using the same water metaphor, which as we have now seen is a characteristic motif of his writings, to show what he has attained as an artist and is lacking in others:

> Von dem Grundtone der Harmonie aus war die Musik zu einer ungeheuer mannigfaltigen Breite aufgeschossen, in der dem zweck- und ruhelos daherschwimmenden absoluten Musiker endlich bang zu Muth wurde: er sah vor sich Nichts wie eine unendliche Wogenmasse von Möglichkeiten,

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[54] CTa, 104; entry for Sunday, 6 June 1869 in Wagner's own handwriting. Note though how he has adopted Cosima's authorial voice.

[55] CTb, 54; entry for Saturday, 30 March 1878. (See *Iliad* viii, 1: "Ἠὼς μὲν κροκόπεπλος" ["saffron-robed dawn"] and i, 477: "ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς" ["rosy-fingered dawn"]; and *Odyssey* xxiii, 241: "ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς.") Although they did include the bracketed translations, the editors of the diaries do not provide an explanation or the source of Wagner's Greek quotations in their notes. Discussions of the title of the "Idyll" invariably credit the garish color of the Wagner's wallpaper rather than giving Homer his due. Note also how the heroic overtones are transferred from Homer to Siegfried Wagner, himself a namesake of the quasi-sun-god-like character in Wagner's *Ring*, as has been noted above. Not entirely coincidentally Wagner was working on Act Three of *Siegfried* when his son was born.

> in sich selbst aber ward er sich keines, diese Möglichkeiten bestimmenden Zweckes bewußt … Somit mußte der Musiker sein ungeheures Schwimmenvermögen fast bereuen …[56]
>
> [From the fundamental pitch of harmony up, music shot upwards into a tremendous manifold expanse, in which the aimlessly and restlessly swimming absolute musician finally came to lose heart: he saw nothing before him but an endless wave-front of possibilities, but within himself he was conscious of no purpose for which to put these possibilities … Thus the musician almost had to regret his tremendous capacity to swim …]

Without the guidance provided by what he previously had called "poetic intent" ("Absicht des Dichters"), composers of absolute music flail about aimlessly without direction. This extension of the water metaphor ties up the last thread left from the previous essays, formulated in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* as "The ocean separates and connects land: so does music separate and connect the two opposites of human art, the arts of dance and poetry" one will recall and in *Oper und Drama* with a far more all-inclusive depiction:

> Dichter und Musiker gleichen … zwei Wanderern, die von einem Scheidepunkte ausgingen … Der Dichter erzählt von den Ebenen, Bergen, Thälern, Fluren, Menschen und Thieren, die er auf seiner weiten Wanderung durch das Festland traf. Der Musiker durchschritt die Meere und berichtet von den Wundern des Ozeans, auf dem er oftmals dem Versinken nahe war, dessen Tiefen und ungeheurerliche Gestaltungen ihn mit wollüstigem Grausen erfüllten.[57]
>
> [Poet and musician are like … two wanderers, who go out on their ways from a departure point … The poet tells of plains, mountains, valleys, meadows, people, and animals he has met on his long journey through the continent. The musician crossed the sea and reports on the wonders of the ocean, on which he often came close to sinking, its depths and monstrous formations having filled him with voluptuous horrors.]

On arriving and comparing notes, the two exchange paths and thus each become a "vollkommener künstlerischer Mensch" ["perfect artistic person"]. This formulation finally allows Wagner to give proper regard to harmony in a musical sense. No longer is corporal motion part of the trinity of the arts; instead, harmony ("the wonders of the

[56] GS 4, 149.
[57] GS 4, 159.

ocean … its depths and monstrous formations"), melody (the ocean journey itself), and poetry (the poet's account of his terrestrial journey) are combined with a new vigor. Wagner's new fondness for harmony is evident when he notes that

> Unsere moderne Musik hat sich gewissermaßen aus der nackten Harmonie entwickelt. Sie hat sich willkürlich nach der unendlichen Fülle von Möglichkeiten bestimmt, die ihr aus dem Wechsel der Grundtöne, und der aus ihnen sich herleitenden Akkorde, sich darboten.[58]
>
> [Our modern music has developed from naked harmony, to some extent. It has set itself voluntarily to the endless abundance of possibilities, which presented themselves with the change of the fundamental notes and the chords derived from them.]

This new emphasis on a feature he had struggled to account for and derive from the ancients was only possible by creating a new binary view of his art focusing on the collective yet different effects of melody and harmony combined with that of words.

Even though the ancient trifold synthesis of the arts had receded to the background in *Oper und Drama*, the topic did not entirely escape Wagner's attention over the next year especially. In an open letter to Franz Liszt (1811-86) dated 8 May 1851 and subsequently published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on 5 March 1852 on Wagner's recommendation, Wagner comments on his friend's plan to found a Goethe center in Weimar. He notes the danger that the representational arts (meaning of course painting or sculpture) will assume such a foundation as their domain, to the detriment of music and poetry.[59] Wagner mentions that Liszt's plan may be idealistic, but it is a worthy attempt to raise the consciousness of the public about the possibility of reunifying the arts through just such endeavors, with the ultimate goal, as far as Wagner was concerned, actually being the founding of a true German national theater. This aim is

[58] GS 4, 157.
[59] GS 5, 8.

clear from his summary of the exchange in *Mein Leben*.[60] (One will recall that the establishment of such a national theater was his intention in Dresden right before the failed revolution as well.)

Wagner followed up on this idea in an open letter dated 25 January 1852 to Franz Brendel (1811-68), editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift*, in which it was published on 6 February. Asked for his thoughts on the progessive trend in music which Brendel would eventually characterize as a "New German School," Wagner presents a more historically accurate picture of the place of the arts in ancient education in "Über musikalische Kritik" ["On Music Criticism"]:

> Wir haben uns gewöhnt, unter "Musik" nur noch die *Tonkunst*, jetzt endlich sogar nur noch die Tonkünstelei, zu begreifen: daß dieß eine willkürliche Annahme ist, wissen wir, denn *das* Volk, welches den Namen "*Musik*" erfand, begriff unter ihm nicht nur *Dichtkunst und Tonkunst*, sondern alle künsterliche Kundgebung des inneren Menschen überhaupt, insoweit er seine Gefühle und Anschauungen in letzter überzeugegendster Versinnlichung durch das Organ der tönenden Sprache ausdrucksvoll mittheilte. Alle Erziehung der athenischen Jugend zerfiel demnach in zwei Theile: in *Musik* und — *Gymnastik*, d. h. den Inbegriff all' der Künste, die auf den vollendetsten Ausdruck durch die leibliche Darstellung selbst Bezug haben. In der "Musik" theilte sich der Athener somit an das *Gehör*, in der Gymnastik an das *Auge* mit, und nur der in Musik und Gymnastik *gleich* Gebildete galt ihnen überhaupt als ein *wirklich* Gebildeter.[61]
>
> [We have grown accustomed to considering only *composition*, and in fact really just the artifice of composers, when we consider "music": we know that this is an arbitrary assumption, because *the* people who invented the term "*music*" included therein not just *poetry and composition* but also all artistic endeavors, especially those of the inner man, in which he expressively imparted his feelings and perceptions in the ultimate and most convincing representation, through the organ of intoned speech. All education of Athenian youth fell accordingly into two parts: *music* and — *gymnastics*, which is the essence of all the arts that attain their most perfect expression through bodily representation. With "music" the Athenians concerned themselves with *hearing*, with the *eyes* in gymnastics, and only he who was educated in music and gymnastics *to the same degree* really seemed to them to be a *truly* educated person.]

[60] ML, 480.
[61] GS 5, 59-60.

Wagner notes that the muses of *Dichtkunst* and *Tonkunst* were also necessarily bound together for the ancients in a "musischen Kunst" ["muse-ic art"],[62] an argument he had just finished exploring as a main thrust of *Oper und Drama*, to which he again refers his reader.[63] In noting the two component parts of the education of Athenian youth, music and gymnastics, Wagner is clearly alluding to Plato's discussion in *Republic*. Finally, any journal that dedicates itself to the art of music must also be willing to allow that the only means one has to appreciate this art is through the efforts of the performers. Once poetry wed to music is realized through actual physical performance the arts will be united as a manifestation of collective will of the people and a journal such as *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* will have outlived its usefulness.[64]

This new incorporation of dance/gesture/corporeality into the issue of performance allowed Wagner to solve two problematic issues at once: (1) the representational arts became a natural outgrowth of the marriage of poetry and music and, thus, of a secondary nature, subsumed by the primary creative impulses, and (2) the performance of a work of art such as Wagner conceived of it was a direct manifestation of the collective will of the people, the performers coming together to recreate what the artist had envisioned and the audience being caught up in this artistic vision. He has to allow that he has failed, as have all artists, in appealing to the general population *en masse*, thus his need to address the supposedly informed critics in his previous writings. Among these must be included the performers themselves, whose task it is to accept (or,

[62] GS 5, 61.
[63] GS 5, 62.
[64] GS 5, 64.

alternately one supposes, to criticize) the will of the poet and composer. This argument was his most effective summation of the relationship between the three arts in this important phase of his thought processes, and it is fitting that it comes at the end of this period of theorizing.

Schopenhauerian Reformulations

Although Wagner characterized *Die Kunst und Revolution* and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* — and later, obviously by extension, *Oper und Drama* too — as coming from "his newer period" ("Schriften aus meiner neueren Periode"),[65] he could have just as easily made the same comment about his activities immediately thereafter, with another new period just then commencing. This was also the time when he discovered the theories of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), which Bryan Magee notes occurred when Wagner's friend and fellow refugee in Zurich the German poet Georg Herwegh (1817-75) brought a German translation (published in the *Vossische Zeitung*) of an English article (published in April 1853 in the *Westminster Review*) about the philosopher to the composer's attention in 1854.[66] Once Wagner picked up Schopenhauer's works, they became something of an obsession for him, favorite reading material to which he

[65] GS 5, 56.

[66] Bryan Magee, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 148-49.

returned repeatedly.[67] Up until Wagner completed *Tristan und Isolde* in 1859, this era also marked a renewed interest in composition. And along with his work on the composition drafts of the *Ring*, Wagner read Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* [*The World as Will and Representation*] (1819; revised and enlarged, 1844) for the first time.[68]

Wagner also signaled a major change in his literary efforts with "Über musikalische Kritik," in fact. Not surprisingly, as can be gleaned from the somewhat resigned attitude of this essay, Wagner turned his immediate attention for approximately the next decade to the issue of performance practice for his own works (mainly *Der fliegende Holländer, Tannhäuser,* and *Lohengrin*) and to various writings about the works of other composers in a series of essays and program notes on such topics as contemporary music ("Wilhelm Baumgartners Lieder," "Vieuxtemps," "Über Franz Liszt's Symphonische Dichtungen", and "Ein Brief an Hector Berlioz"), specific works by Gluck, Mozart, and Beethoven, and even Hungarian music ("Über die ungarische Musik").[69] His published comments on his newest projects, *Tristan und Isolde, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,* and the still incomplete *Der Ring des Nibelungen,* mostly took the form of program notes and/or brief introductions rather than lengthy theoretical justifications such as he had undertaken previously.

Even after this period of more accessible writings of the 1850s faded, Wagner only returned sporadically in any great detail to the issue of the synthesis of the arts. By

[67] Bryan Magee, 133ff.
[68] Bryan Magee, 133.
[69] cf. Nattiez, 309-11.

1870, the time of his monograph *Beethoven*, which was meant to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the great composer's birth, Wagner, now heavily under the influence of Schopenhauer, had effected a complete shift in his paradigm relating the arts. Curiously, in his zeal to impute so much of the credit for the advances of German Romanticism in music to Beethoven, Wagner very much downplays any of the classical derivation of his ideas to the point of introducing them almost as an afterthought to what has already been stated explicitly in the bulk of the discussion.

Having discussed Beethoven as a symphonic composer, Wagner notes that works such as the Ninth Symphony and even the *Missa solemnis* were conceived first and foremost in an instrumental vein. Wagner goes so far as to say that the words set are not as important as the actual musical idea itself:

> Durch die Erfahrung, daß eine Musik nichts von ihrem Charakter verliert, wenn ihr auch sehr verschiedenartige Texte untergelegt werden, erhellt sich andererseits nun das Verhältniß der Musik zur *Dichtkunst* als ein durchaus illusorisches: denn es bestätigt sich, daß, wenn zu einer Musik gesungen wird, nicht der poetische Gedanke, den man namentlich bei Chorgesängen nicht einmal verständlich artikulirt vernimmt, sondern höchstens Das von ihm aufgefaßt wird, was er im Musiker als Musik und zu Musik anregte. Eine Vereinigung der Musik und der Dichtkunst muß daher stets zu einer solchen Geringstellung der letzteren ausschlagen, daß es nur wieder zu verwundern ist, wenn wir sehen, wie namentlich auch unsere großen deutschen Dichter das Problem einer Vereinigung der beiden Künste stets von Neuem erwogen, oder gar versuchten. Sie wurden hierbei ersichtlich von der Wirkung der Musik in der *Oper* geleitet: und allerdings schien hier einzig das Feld zu liegen, auf welchem es zu einer Lösung des Problems führen mußte.[70]
>
> [The experience that music loses none of its character even when underlaid with extremely different types of texts now sheds light on the relationship of music to *poetry* as a thoroughly illusory one: for it is proven that when sung to music, it is not the poetic thoughts which one hears comprehensibly articulated by individual choral voices, but rather at best that which is comprehensible through them as it stimulates the musician as music to make music. A union of music and poetry must therefore always produce a lesser stature for the latter, leaving one astonished yet again when we see how even our great German poets would constantly consider, or even undertake, anew the problem of the union of both arts. They were evidently led into this by the effect of music in *opera*, and certainly this seemed to them to have been the only field which could lead to a solution to this problem.]

[70] GS 9, 103-4.

Following the Schopenhauerian view, gone are any equivocations or circuitous explanations: music does indeed now dominate for the composer who has the experience of his mature music dramas behind him. His recourse to the term "opera" here in a clearly pejorative sense makes clear why he no longer used that designation for his own works.

As Nattiez demonstrates, the Schopenhauerian bent to Wagner's discussion abstracts drama to the metaphysical level, a direct expression of the Will, which music alone has the power to reveal. This formulation places music at the top of a hierarchy that subsumes the successive levels below it, including in turn drama and poetry:[71]

> Die Musik, welche nicht die in den Erscheinung der Welt enthaltenen Ideen darstellt, dagegen selbst eine, und zwar eine umfassende Idee der Welt ist, schließt das Drama ganz von selbst in sich, da das Drama wiederum selbst die einzige der Musik adäquate Idee der Welt ausdrückt. Das Drama überragt ganz in der Weise die Schranken der Dichtkunst, wie die Musik der jeder anderen, namentlich aber der bildenen Kunst, dadurch, daß seine Wirkung einzig im Erhabenen liegt.[72]
>
> [Music, which is not depicted in the phenomenon of the ideas comprising the world but instead is one of the ideas of the world itself and indeed a comprehensive one, includes drama completely within itself, for drama in turn itself is the only aspect of music which expresses an adequate idea of the world. Drama towers over the limits of poetry entirely in this way, as does music over every other art, especially the visual arts, as its effect lies only in the sublime.]

This argument is meant to show how music is related by analogy to drama, as a sort of natural manifestation of the same phenomenon.[73] The comparison works well for showing how appropriate it may be to apply dramatic descriptions to the procedures one finds in Beethoven's instrumental music, for example. At the same time, in works with a

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[71] Nattiez, 149.

[72] GS 9, 105.

[73] Bryan Magee also unpacks this change in Wagner's thinking in more detail in his Chap. 10, "Wagner Re-Evaluates His Values"; see 174ff.

text, even the words of Goethe or Schiller are not adequate to determine the musical setting, for

> dieß vermag allein das *Drama* und zwar nicht das dramatische Gedicht, sondern das wirklich vor unseren Augen sich bewegende Drama, als sichtbar gewordenes Gegenbild der Musik, wo dann das Wort und die Rede einzig der Handlung, nicht aber dem dichterischen Gedanken mehr angehören.[74]
>
> [only *drama* can do this, and to be sure not a dramatic poem, but rather the drama actually moving before our eyes made visible as a counterpart of music, in which then word and dialog only belong to the action, but no longer to the poetic thought.]

There can be no doubt that music was now the guiding factor for Wagner. Even the dramatic action, making a reappearance in a similar guise to his use of the term in *Oper und Drama*, is of less importance than the music itself. Indeed, the action, formerly the *sine qua non* of drama for Wagner, now arises only from the drama imparted by music. It suddenly becomes clear why he designated such a static work as *Tristan und Isolde* simply with the term "Handlung,"[75] for there the music reigns over the drama and the action it depicts, a fact the composer himself soon admitted to in print.

Either Wagner had committed a complete change of thinking between the early 1850s and 1870 or he was attempting to justify his methods and the results he produced in the interim. Both arguments have been made with varying degrees of success,[76] but the composer himself discussed this apparent change of heart with Cosima at the time:

> Of *Opera and Drama*, which he is correcting, he says: "I know what Nietzsche didn't like in it — it is the same thing which [Ernst] Kossak took up and which set Schopenhauer against me: what I

[74] GS 9, 111-12.

[75] Nattiez, 148. (See the discussion of "Über die Benennung 'Musikdrama'" immediately below.)

[76] cf. Nattiez's summary (pp. 148-49), showing both his own position and the opposite one taken by Frank W. Glass in *The Fertilizing Seed: Wagner's Concept of Poetic Intent* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983); see also Glass, 270-71.

> said about words. At the same time I didn't dare to say that it was music which produced drama, although inside myself I knew it."[77]

Confronted with the details of the gestation of these concepts relating to the synthesis of the arts and his constant reformulations thereof, it would seem Wagner was trying to cover his tracks long after the fact. If what he told his wife long after the fact were true, *Oper und Drama* would represent one of the most elaborate, purposely flawed exegeses of any topic of the modern era. It was indeed his acquaintance with the ideas of Schopenhauer that brought about this change in his thinking, one that ultimately rendered a full equal reunification (or "democratization") of the arts a futile impracticality. Magee terms this a turning away from the conscious "Greek" form of "rational optimism" Wagner had displayed so publicly in his published writings to a more nuanced, even subconscious and intuitive Schopenhauerian attitude he had already favored in his earlier works.[78]

However one takes this apparent change in Wagner's logic, it should be noted that thus far in *Beethoven* the Greek patrilineage of these ideas that he had previously taken such pains to trace in his other writings is missing entirely. Again, this obviously reflects the revision in deriving opera from folk song he had felt compelled to make in *Oper und Drama* for purely practical reasons. Yet in the present case, he certainly seems more comfortable in relegating the classical allusions to an almost appendix-like position, coming as they do after the discussion of Beethoven's style. Wagner cannot give up

[77] CTa, 457; entry for Sunday, 11 February 1872.
[78] Bryan Magee, 177-79.

these references as they still represent an ideal for him towards which he felt he must strive in his own effort to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Thus, he comments in *Beethoven*:

> Es ist schwer, sich deutlich vorzustellen, in welcher Art die Musik von je ihre besondere Macht der Erscheinungswelt gegenüber äußerte. Uns muß es dünken, daß die Musik der Hellenen die Welt der Erscheinung selbst innig durchdrang, und mit den Gesetzten ihrer Wahrnehmbarkeit sich verschmolz. Die Zahlen des Pythagoras sind gewiß nur aus der Musik lebendig zu verstehen; nach den Gesetzten der Eurhythmie baute der Architekt, nach denen der Harmonie erfaßte der Bildner die menschliche Gestalt; die Regeln der Melodik machten den Dichter zum Sänger, und aus dem Chorgesange projizirte sich das Drama auf die Bühne, wir sehen überall das innere, nur aus dem Geiste der Musik zu verstehende Gesetz bestimmten …[79]
>
> [It is difficult to imagine clearly in what way music of the past expressed its special power with regard to the phenomenal world. It would seem to us that the music of the Hellenic world penetrated deeply the phenomenal itself and melded itself with the laws of its own perceptibility. The numbers of Pythagoras can indeed only be understood vividly as arising from music; the architect built according to the laws of eurhythmy, the sculptor grasped the human form according to those of harmony; the rules of melody made the poet into a singer, and from the choral ode drama projected itself onto the stage — we see manifested in all these that the internal law, which can only be understood as the spirit of music, has determined them …]

The synthesis of the arts here results from a more linear derivation of their various natures than Wagner had undertaken previously, yet he still demonstrates that drama is the best suited to exploit all of their individual traits. And although the discussion of it is relegated to an *a posteriori* position in honor of Beethoven, the classical roots of drama are not abandoned. Once again, melody, rhythm, and harmony feature prominently in his derivation of the various arts.

Wagner soon took up this same concise historiographic approach in dealing with the derivation of the term that was gaining currency for his works in "Über die Benennung 'Musikdrama'" ["On the Term 'Music Drama'"] (26 October 1872). The Greek origins of his conception of drama are important to his argument again; yet here, as etymology and semantics are so crucial to his logic, he can not help but feature his

[79] GS 9, 120-1.

sources prominently. For the first time in a long while, Wagner cites Aeschylus by name again, but before doing so — and more importantly for his purposes here of course — the composer summarizes again his new position regarding the supremacy of music:

> Das Misliche für die Aufstellung einer Benennung des gemeinten Kunstwerks war … die Annahme einer Nöthigung zur Bezeichnung zweier disparater Elemente, der Musik und des Drama's, aus deren Verschmelzung man das neue Ganze hergestellt sehen zu müssen vermeinte. Das Schwierigste hierbei ist jedenfalls, die "Musik" in eine richtige Stellung zum "Drama" zu bringen, das sie, wie wir dieses soeben ersehen mußten, mit diesem in keine ebenbürtige Verbindung zu bringen ist, und uns entweder viel mehr, oder viel weniger als das Drama gelten muß. Der Grund hiervon liegt wohl darin, daß unter dem Namen der Musik eine *Kunst*, ja ursprünglich sogar der Inbegriff aller Kunst überhaupt, unter dem des Drama aber recht eigentlich eine *That* der Kunst verstanden wird…. Nun heißt "Drama" ursprünglich *That* oder *Handlung*: als solche, auf der Bühne dargestellt, bildete sie anfänglich einen Theil der Tragödie, d. h. des Opferchor-Gesanges, dessen ganze Breite das Drama endlich einnahm und so zur Hauptsache ward.[80]
>
> [The danger for proposing a name for the intended artwork was … the assumption of the compulsion for designating two disparate elements, those of music and of drama, out of the combination of which one supposed the need to see the new totality thus produced. The most difficult thing in this is at any rate putting "music" in a correct rank with respect to "drama," with which it, as we had to gather then, cannot be brought into an equal combination, and how to us as drama it must mean either much more or much less. The reason for this lies well within the fact that music is understood as an *art*, indeed originally in fact the embodiment of all art, while drama is more appropriately a *deed* of art…. Now "drama" originally meant a *deed* or *action*: as such portrayed on the stage it formed at first but a part of tragedy, that is the sacrificial choral ode, whose entire breadth was taken up by drama, until this became its main point.]

Music is perhaps lessened by its association with drama: it either "must mean either much more or much less" to the listener through its association with drama, indeed becoming drama itself. Music is still the highest art, and drama is only an aspect of it, as Wagner had maintained in *Beethoven*. He makes the filial relationship of drama to music clear when he goes on to quote Goethe, calling music "der Theil, der Anfangs Alles war" ["the part that was everything in the beginning"].[81]

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[80] GS 9, 304.
[81] GS 9, 305.

In a moment of rare public self-consciousness, Wagner evidently reveals in "Über die Benennung 'Musikdrama'" that he was undergoing a bout of true depression at this time. His repeated efforts to make himself understood had often required him to reevaluate his thinking, as has been noted above. This could not have been a pleasant undertaking considering he well knew that his efforts often provoked as much or more ridicule and consternation as empathy among his readers. Any signs of confusion or disarray in his theories or logic or, worse yet, in his music dramas themselves could arouse criticism. Usually, this seems to have affected Wagner little, but an ongoing feud with the music critic, composer, and poet Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-97), an art historian by training, flared up once again in the present essay as a symptom of Wagner's growing impatience with those who would second guess him:[82]

> Herrn W. H. Riehl vergeht, wie er irgendwo versicherte, bei meinen Opern Hören und Sehen, während er bei einigen hört, bei anderen sieht: wie soll man nun ein solches unhör- und unsichtbares Ding nennen? Fast wäre ich geneigt gewesen, mich auf die Sichtbarkeit desselben einzig zu berufen, und somit an das "Schauspiel" mich zu halten, da ich meine Dramen gern als *ersichtlich gewordene Thaten der Musik* bezeichnet hätte. Das wäre denn nun ein recht kunstphilosophischer Titel gewesen, und hätte gut in die Register der zukünftigen Poloniusse unserer kunstsinnigen Höfe gepaßt … Allein, trotz allem dargebotenen Schauspiele, wovon Viele behaupten, daß es in das Monströse ginge, würde bei mir am Ende doch noch zu wenig zu sehen sein: wie mir denn z. B. vorgeworfen worden ist, daß ich im zweiten Akte des "Tristan" versäumt hätte, ein glänzendes Ballfest vor sich gehen zu lassen, während welches sich das unselige Liebespaar zur rechten Zeit in irgend ein Bosquet verloren hätte, wo dann ihre Entdeckung einen gehörig skandalösen Eindruck und alles dazu sonst noch Passende veranlaßt haben würde: statt dessen geht nun in diesem Akte fast gar nichts wie Musik vor sich, welche leider wieder so sehr Musik zu sein scheint, daß Leuten von der Organisation des Herrn W. H. Riehl darüber das Hören vergeht, was um so schlimmer ist, da ich dabei fast gar nichts zu sehen biete.[83]

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[82] The fact that Wagner had written an anonymous and somewhat malicious review of Riehl's *Neues Novellenbuch* in 1867 could not have led to any great feelings of warmth in return from Riehl. Both in his review and in private Wagner referred to him as a basically "goodhearted philistine" (CTa, 455; entry for Tuesday, 6 February 1872). (See also GS 8, 208ff.)

[83] GS 9, 306-7. Cosima's diary entry for Wednesday, 23 October 1872 helps to explain the reference to Wagner's "monstrosities": "R. writes to Prof. Nietzsche, announcing our visit to Basel, and among other things he encloses a little clipping from a newspaper, in which some tasteless extracts from opera texts are quoted and criticized, with the remark, 'This goes even further than R. Wagner'!" (CTa, 544). (See also my discussion of this letter to Nietzsche below.)

> [As Herr W. H. Riehl somewhere asserted, his hearing and seeing fades in my operas, sometimes he hears, sometimes he sees: how could one refer to such an inaudible and invisible thing? I'd almost be disposed to go along with the visual aspect of it myself and thus stick with the "(visible) play," as I could have happily designated my dramas as *deeds of music made visible*. Now that would be a fitting artistic, philosophical title, and it would be quite suitable for the registers of the future Poloniusses of our art-minded courts … Yet, despite all the plays I've presented, in which many people maintain monstrosities occur, I'd think there's still too little to be seen: the example is thrown at me of how I have neglected in the second act of "Tristan" to include a brilliant ball, during which at the right moment the unfortunate lovers could secret themselves in some sort of shrubbery, their discovery would then bring a proper scandalous impression; and instead of these things, almost nothing at all transpires in this Act except for music, which unfortunately again very much appears to be only music, so that people with a constitution such as Herr W. H. Riehl lose their hearing through it. Worse yet, I give them almost nothing to look at during all this.]

Here Wagner is obviously engaging in open ridicule for those who, like Riehl, expect more pictorial elements in their opera, both musical and scenic. Wagner's Schopenhauerian description of his works as "deeds of music made visible" is more poetic than literal. At best, it supports his description of gesture/mimesis and once again thus incorporates the performer into his reckoning of drama. Taken in the wider scope, however, one must acknowledge that he is allowing for a synesthesia in which the lack of action can be explained by the amount of drama in the music itself, which is not descriptive in the programmatic sense, but rather is "only music." The action results at least in part from the music; the music does not depict the action.

If in public here Wagner assumes a sarcastic tone, in private he reveals more self-doubt and irritability. On the same day he was working on this essay, Cosima recorded in her diary her husband's dejection:

> … R. speaks in melancholy of his lot, always having to begin anew, getting nothing from his works but trouble and torment … he says the whole of the *Nibelungen* seems to him so remote, so outlived, and now having constantly to teach beginners the ABC's of its interpretation — the only thing which gives him pleasure is his abstract traffic with the world through his writings. (He is writing an essay on the term "music drama" for Fritzsch.)[84]

[84] CTa, 545-46; entry for Saturday, 26 October 1872.

Wagner indeed had a bad day and in the evening had spent a great deal of time with his copyists on a scene from *Das Rheingold*. In this respect, writing about such an abstract concept as what one ought to call his works does seem like it would provide some respite from more mundane issues. Only a few days earlier, on 23 October 1872, Wagner responded to a letter from Nietzsche with even more telling comments about his mood at the time:

> What you wrote was most gratifying, since it expressed with pleasant solemnity the frame of mind in which we all seem to be at present. It would almost be called a mood of apprehension following the disgust we feel at everything we see and hear, so that when finally we regain our senses, it is with the question what do we actually have in common with this scandalous world of ours? … On the whole I feel increasingly that I know my fellow humans less and less: this may be very necessary if one is to write for posterity. But it is curious how often I feel like a novice under constant supervision! When one is simply working in a vacuum, individual loneliness becomes immense. I can well understand what it was that so often stifled and almost suffocated you: you simply looked around you a great deal. But it is a question now of seeing and not seeing! If one abandons hope, one will no doubt also be rid of one's despair. In the end one feels that the only means of gaining self-consciousness is to set oneself apart, quite emphatically, from one's fellow men, and to do so, moreover, by attacking this vileness. At least I myself have now reached the point where I refuse to mince my words in any way: and if the Empress of Austria herself were to cross my path, she would be well-served! Something must emerge from all this. For one thing is certain, there can be no question of any compromise or private understanding here: to make oneself feared, when one is so very much hated, is the only course that can help.[85]

Clearly, for Wagner writing as a means to make himself understood by this stage also encompassed ridiculing those he found less than sympathetic to his ideas. Doing so allowed him to direct some of his hostility towards individuals such as Riehl, who from Wagner's point of view as much refused to see and hear as he was robbed of his bearings by the composer's non-descriptive "deeds of music made visible."

Although Wagner's formulation of *Gesamtkunstwerk* had undergone a pronounced transformation over the years, especially with regards to the relationships

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[85] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 812.

between the constituent arts, he maintained in *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* that for an interested party a comparison of the newest version of his theories with that found in *Oper und Drama* would prove enlightening:

> Es würde ihm dann auch wohl nicht entgehen, daß, wenn in Betreff des Gegenstandes selbst, nämlich der Bedeutung und des Charakters, welche der Verfasser dem musikalisch konzipirten Drama zuspricht, zwischen der älteren, ausführlicheren, und der gegenwärtigen, gedrängteren Fassung zwar eine vollständige Übereinstimmung herrscht, in mancher Beziehung diese letztere dennoch neue Gesichtspunkte darbietet, von welchen aus betrachtet Verschiedenes auch anders sich darstellt; und hierin dürfte das Interessante dieser neueren Abhandlung auch für Diejenigen liegen, welche mit der älteren sich bereits vertraut gemacht hatten.[86]
>
> [It should not escape him that although, in regards to the subject itself, a complete agreement prevails between the older, more thorough version and the present, more concise one, especially in the meaning and character which the author attributes to musically conceived drama, in some respects the latter version presents new points of view, which represent themselves differently out of various considerations; and herein may lie the interest of this newer discussion for those who have already made themselves familiar with the previous essay.]

Of course, there is no "complete agreement" in Wagner's writings concerning even such fundamental an issue as the relationship between words and music, as has been demonstrated above. But he continually concerned himself with this issue based on his desire to achieve some sort of unity of the arts as profound as what he imagined the ancient Greeks to have enjoyed. This new *Gesamtkunstwerk* was a constant goal in his thoughts. Here too he found inspiration particularly for his interest in harmonic and melodic aspects in music.

[86] GS 9, 127.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY/HISTORICISM AND/AS STYLE:

EARLY MUSIC

> Wir zogen nun das Beispiel Shakespeare's heran, um uns einen möglichen Einblick in die Natur und namentlich das Verfahren des wahrhaften Dramatikers zu gewinnen. So geheimnißvoll hier auch das Meiste bleiben mußte, ersahen wir doch, daß es die mimische Kunst war, mit welcher der Dichter gänzlich zu Eines ward, und müssen nun erkennen, daß diese mimische Kunst gleichsam der Lebensthau ist, in welchen die dichterische Absicht zu tauchen war, um, wie in zauberischer Verwandlung, als Spiegel des Lebens erscheinen zu können. Wenn nun jede Handlung, selbst jeder gemeinste Vorgang des Lebens (wie uns dieß nicht nur Shakespeare, sondern selbst jeder ächte Theaterstückmacher zeigt) als mimisches Spiel reproduzirt, sich uns in dem verklärten Lichte und mit der objektiven Wirkung eines Spiegelbildes zeigt, so müssen wir in Folge unserer weiteren Betrachtungen konstatiren, daß wiederum dieses Spiegelbild in der reinsten Verklärung der Idealität sich zeigt, sobald es in dem Zauberbronnen der Musik getränkt, gleichsam nur noch als reine Form, von jeder realistischen Stofflichkeit befreit, uns vorgehalten wird.
>
> Nicht mehr die *Form* der Musik, sondern die *Formen der historisch entwickelten* Musik würden daher zunächst in Erwägung zu ziehen sein, wenn wiederum auf diejenige höchste Möglichkeit in der Ausbildung der Anlagen des mimisch-dramatischen Kunstwerkes geschlossen werden soll, welche dem Suchenden und Trachtenden als stummes Räthsel vorschwebte, während sie andererseits sich laut und überlaut aufdrängte.
>
> — *Über die Bestimmung der Oper*[1]

> [We now consulted Shakespeare's example in order to gain a possible insight into the nature and especially the method of the true dramatist. Even though the greater part here must also remain mysterious, however, we gathered that it was the mimetic art with which the poet was completely one and had now to recognize that this mimetic art is practically the life-dew in which the poetic intent was immersed in order that it could appear as the mirror of life as if in a magical transformation. Now if every action, indeed every mundane incident of life (as demonstrated to us not just by Shakespeare but every genuine playwright) reproduced by mimetic act shows itself to us in transfiguring light and with the objective impression of a mirror image, then we must consequently in our subsequent observations ascertain that again this mirror image appears in the purest transfiguration of ideality as soon as it has drunk at the magic spring of music, even held up to us practically only as pure form freed from every realistic materiality.
>
> No longer the *form* of music but rather the *forms music historically developed* thus first would be drawn into the consideration if indeed the highest possible development in the ability of mimetic-dramatic artwork is to be determined, which hovered as a silent riddle before the seeker and striver, while at the same time it pressed loudly and noisily (for an answer).]

According to Wagner, one cannot fully realize the potentials of drama and music drama without first appreciating the developments made in those fields. His extended

[1] GS 9, 146

water/mirror metaphor with the commingling of mimesis and poetry producing drama carries through as the two enjoy the transfiguring effect of music to create the highest ideal of a "pure form freed from every realistic materiality" of its creation. No longer limited to the qualities of its individual elements, this new composite artwork becomes the supreme goal. Unlike the situation he faced with the ideas of the ancients, Wagner did have examples of music from later eras to guide his presumptive need for further developments in the synthesis of music and drama. Wagner's need to sum up what had come before him in order to justify his own developments is clearly his agenda, but his historiographic discussions bear out his genuine interest in earlier musical styles and composers. As he continues his observations, it becomes increasingly evident that he did absorb various stylistic elements from the plurality of "*forms music historically developed*." To his way of thinking, knowledge of these past stylistic forms in which music was guised was the only means to realize "The Destiny of Opera."

The Middle Ages and Folk Style

Along with the largely theoretical discussions of ancient music, Wagner also possessed examples of medieval music as well as summaries of its theoretical bases in several volumes in his library. These would serve him in a far more practical fashion, as he could now employ actual stylistic features of older music in his own works to aid in recreating past epochs. Obviously, his interest in music history was of great service to

his own creative endeavors, a fact that has little been explored previously. For example, the loss of rhythm in early Christian music provided the crucial impetus that plunged music, and thereby drama, from its lofty place of illumination in ancient Greek society into the darkness that was the Middle Ages. Curiously, Wagner downplays the topic of rhythm to a great extent in many of his discussions of the fundamental elements of music. In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner derived rhythm from the heightened tone-speech (*Tonsprache*), which for him was the vessel that carried the nascent forms of melody, rhythm, and gesture bound up together. Although by this time in Wagner's rethinking of his theories the ultimate outcome of this discussion as exemplified by his own style is somewhat removed from its ancient pedigree, it is clear that his allusion here is to the Greeks: "Die *Tonsprache* ist Anfang und Ende der Wortsprache, wie das *Gefühl* Anfang und Ende des Verstandes, der *Mythos* Anfang und Ende der Geschichte, die *Lyrik* Anfang und Ende der Dichtkunst ist." ["*Tone-speech* is the beginning and end of word-speech, just as *feeling* is the beginning and end of understanding, *myth* the beginning and end of history, the *lyric* the beginning and end of poetry."][2]

According to Wagner's theories, rhythm was used along with melodic raising and lowering of inflections to accentuate speech in order to aid in projecting the meaning of the words. For Wagner, this idea of rhythmic speech is naturally combined with that of dance/gesture.[3] It was the loss of the essential quality of rhythm that led music as tone-speech away from the unity it had enjoyed in ancient Greece to the rather more static

[2] GS 4, 91.
[3] GS 4, 121.

form it adopted at the beginning of the Middle Ages. By the time of *Oper und Drama*, it is decisively for folk music to redeem music from the drudgery of its religious garb according to Wagner, another similarity to be found in Reissmann's discussion of the importance of folk music in the overall development of musical style.[4] Because of the fact that Wagner's work preceded that of his scholarly colleague by a decade, the influence clearly would have flowed in the opposite direction, with Reissmann borrowing either from Wagner or, just as likely, from another popular dissertation on the importance of folk song that was so crucial to Romantic perceptions, such as Johann Gottfried von Herder's manifesto and collection of various folk materials entitled *Von deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter* (Hamburg, 1773) and the follow-up volume *Volkslieder* (Leipzig, 1778-79). Wagner had these in his Dresden library in a single volume, 1300-plus-page edition of selected works by Herder (1744-1803).[5]

Even after the shift away from Hellenic inspirations for the unity of the arts, Wagner reiterated Greek influences on occasion. For example, in "*Zukunftsmusik*" he notes that:

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[4] In his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Reissmann emphasizes the influence of folk music on art music throughout his massive study. He devotes an entire volume (2. Band = 3. Buch) to this topic. The individual books of his study are: 1. Buch: "Die vorchristliche Zeit," 2. Buch: "Die Musik unter dem Einfluß des Christenthums," 3. Buch: "Der Volksgeist bestimmt die Weiterentwickelung der Tonkunst," and 4. Buch: "Die Individualität gewinnt Antheil an der Weiterentwickelung der Tonkunst." [First Book: "The Pre-Christian Era," Second Book: "Music under the Influence of Christianity," Third Book: "Folk-Spirit Determines the Further Development of Composition," and Fourth Book: "Individuality Gains a Part of the Further Development of Composition."]

Unlike Wagner, Reissmann includes chant as among the genres that benefited from secular influence. But both writers claim a folk influence on the chorale tradition (Reissmann, 2. Bd., 2. Kapitel). (See below for a discussion of Wagner and the chorale style.) See also Reissmann, *Das deutsche Lied in seiner historischen Entwicklung* (Cassel: Verlag von Oswald Bertram, 1861). Again, Reissmann's study post-dates Wagner's writings under consideration here.

[5] Westernhagen, 93-94.

> Bei den Griechen kennen wir die Musik als Begleitung des Tanzes; die Bewegung des Tanzes gab ihr, wie dem Sänger zur Tanzweise gesungenen Gedichte, die Gesetze des Rhythmus, welche Vers und Melodie so entschieden bestimmten, daß die griechische Musik (unter welcher die Poesie fast immer mit verstanden war) nur als der in Tönen und Worten sich immer sprechende Tanz angesehen werden kann. Diese im Volke lebenden, ursprünglich der heidnischen Götterfeier angehörenden Tanzweisen waren es, welche, den Inbegriff aller antiken Musik ausmachend, von den frühesten christlichen Gemeinden zur Feier auch ihres allmählich sich ausbildenden Gottesdienstes verwendet werden. Diese ernste Feier, welche den Tanz als weltlich und gottlos völlig ausschloß, ließ natürlich auch das Wesentliche der antiken Melodie, den ungemein lebhaften und wechselvollen Rhythmus, ausfallen, wodurch die Melodie den rhythmisch gänzlich unaccentuirten Charackter des noch heute in unseren Kirchen gebräuchlichen Chorales annahm. Offenbar war mit der Entziehung der rhythmischen Beweglichkeit dieser Melodie aber das ihr eigenthümlichen Motiv des Ausdruckes geraubt und von dem ungemein geringen Ausdruck der antiken Melodie, sobald ihr eben dieser Schmuck des Rhythmus genommen war, hätten wir somit noch heute Gelegenheit, uns zu überzeugen, sobald wir sie uns nämlich auch ohne die jetzt ihr untergelegte Harmonie denken.[6]
>
> [With the Greeks we are acquainted with music as an accompaniment to dance; just as it moved the singers to a dance-like singing of poems, the movement of dance gave music the laws of rhythm, which determined verse and melody so decisively that Greek music (among which poetry is almost always understood to be included) can only be regarded as a constantly communicative dance in tones and words. These dance-tunes that lived on in the people and which originally were associated with the worship of pagan gods and constituted the essence of all ancient music were employed by the earliest Christian communities to celebrate the gradually developing Mass. This serious ceremony, which completely excluded dance as worldly and ungodly, naturally also let go of the essence of ancient melody, its irregularly lively and mutable rhythm, through which melody assumed the rhythmically completely unaccented character of the chorale as it is still used in our churches today. Obviously, this melody was robbed of its peculiar motive of expression with the removal of its rhythmic vitality; and had we the desire to convince ourselves of the uncommonly small expressivity of ancient melody as soon as the decoration of rhythm was taken away we would only have to think of melody today without its underlying harmony.]

Without rhythm, melody is as unthinkable for modern audiences as it would be without its harmonic support; both were foundations upon which melody was customarily constructed at the time of Wagner's writing. The Greek influence on dance music may be taken less as a stylistic feature than a general socio-cultural derivation of the popular music of the people. As the secular and religious spheres split into two mutually exclusive realms in the Middle Ages, the preference for a dignified, rhythmically neutral

[6] GS 7, 106.

style in sacred music gained dominance, something that Wagner notes still was a common feature of Protestant worship even in his time.

Just as Wagner had formulated a relationship between dance rhythm, words, and melody in *Oper und Drama*, he had previously discussed the relevance of harmony and words in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. In this discussion, which follows immediately that on harmony cited in the previous chapter, melodic rhythm is determined by the words themselves. But as words became subservient to rules of melodic motion based on harmonic principles, melody became but a surface feature completely unreliant on rhythm:

> So lange das Wort in Macht war, gebot es Anfang und Ende; als es in den bodenlosen Grund der Harmonie versank, als es nur noch "Ächzen und Seufzen der Seele" war — wie auf der brünstigsten Höhe der katholischen Kirchenmusik —, da ward auch das Wort willkürlich auf der Spitze jener harmonischen Säulen, der unrhythmischen Melodie, wie von Woge zu Woge geworfen, und die unermeßlichen harmonische Möglichkeit mußte aus sich nun selbst die Gesetze für ihr endliches Erscheinen geben.[7]
>
> [As long as word was in power it controlled the beginning and end; as it sank into the bottomless foundation of harmony, as it became only "groanings and moanings of the soul" — as in the most impassioned heights of Catholic church music — then the word was also cast arbitrarily on the capitals of those harmonic columns, as unrhythmic melody tossed from wave to wave, and the immeasurable harmonic possibilities themselves had to dictate the laws for its (melody's) final appearance.]

It is clear from the context in which this passage occurs that Wagner means words had once been in power to determine the "beginning and end" of sung tones (the rhythm of notes), as well as metaphorically being the source and essential element that necessitated the creation of melody, something that he came to call *Tonsprache* in *Oper und Drama*. Wagner's critical position regarding the rhythmically uninteresting declamation of religious music is even clearer a few pages later in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, when he

[7] GS 3, 87.

refers to the human voice as having become less and less meaningful in the delivery of liturgical texts: "… die menschliche *Stimme*, im Lallen des christlich stereotypischen, ewig und ewig, bis zur vollsten Gedankenlosigkeit wiederholten Wortes …" ["… the human *voice*, in the stammering of Christian stereotypical word, eternally and perpetually repeated, to the point of complete thoughtlessness …"].[8] One thinks here immediately of the singing of Psalms, especially as Wagner includes a deliberate reference to the lesser doxology,[9] but his point could be applied to various other types of religious music as well.

As the use of rhythm faded under the influence of the Church, so did the melodic interest and the meaningfulness of the text as set by composers as far as Wagner was concerned. Because Wagner relied so heavily on the meaning of words to convey ideas in *Tonsprache*, rhythmic neutrality was anathema to him. Wagner was never content to have melody carry the sense of the text, hence his plea for "Deutlichkeit" ["Clarity"] in a handwritten notice dated 13 August 1876, the opening day of the first production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Bayreuth, which was posted by the composer backstage for his "colleagues" (Example 1). Rhythmic differentiation and how it affects textual delivery is clearly the most important element in this directive to his singers, as the shorter notes

[8] GS 3, 90.

[9] in German: "Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn und auch dem heilige Geiste, wie es war im Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen." ["Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."] cf. *Tannhäuser* (III, 1): "Der Gnade Heil ist dem Büßer beschieden, / er geht einst ein in der Seligen Frieden; / vor Höll' und Tod ist ihm nicht bang', / drum preis' ich Gott mein Lebelang. / Halleluja! Halleluja in Ewigkeit, in Ewigkeit!" ["Salvation's grace is granted to the penitent, / he who enters into blessed peace; / before hell and death he does not shrink, / thus shall I praise God my whole life long. / Hallelujah! Hallelujah for all eternity, for all eternity!"] (GS 2, 31).

with more text require more attention from an interpreter than the longer ones. Indeed, clarity and rhythmically precise declamation were crucial factors in the performance practice of his works, as Wagner made evident here.

It is interesting to note how Wagner deals with rhythmic neutrality in capturing the style of medieval music and chorales. Rather than adopting a quasi-archaic style with many equal note values, he actually heightens the effect of the supposedly static nature of early music by contrasting it with a more contemporary style, either in the orchestra and/or with other voices in an evidently different rhythmic guise. In the First Act of *Tannhäuser*, the shepherd's tune that opens Scene Three is carried over into the entry of the pilgrims. Wagner reinforces the contrast of a rhythmically neutral style in their music with the shepherd's pipe by carefully indicating tempo changes; indeed, the note under the English horn part states "In each case the interludes are faster than the pilgrims' song, which always remains in a moderate tempo" (Example 2). Although the shepherd's codetta to the pagan May song he has just finished is not particularly complicated rhythmically, the tempo changes tend to emphasize the sense of the sacred music being ambiguous with regards to rhythmic drive in stark contrast to the shepherd's pipe. The pilgrims' music hovers amorphously, almost oppressively in the air as they enter, while the shepherd's song sounds at the very least merry in contrast (tempo marking: *lustig* or "merry"). Thus, Wagner characterizes musically the thrust of the plot, the worldliness of immediate gratification versus the morality of forbearance for the eternal soul. It was no less than an inspiration to thrust his title character into this vignette with a rapid scene change to demonstrate Tannhäuser's true intent towards repentance and

acknowledgement of the error of his ways as he clearly sides with the pilgrims by subsequently adopting their music moments later.

Wagner employs a similar stratification in the Third Act of *Tannhäuser*, when the pilgrims return from Rome. This passage serves as a dramatic recapitulation of the opening of the overture at the beginning of the opera, as it runs through the same melodic material presented originally there by the orchestra for the first time *in toto* in the opera. Indeed, this is the first reappearance of the pilgrims' hymn since it was heard in the overture. As such, much as the rapid scene change heightens the sense of the mystical in the First Act, this passage from Act Three is marked both as a musical and dramatic gesture (Example 3). Here, Elisabeth and Wolfram are the foils to the pilgrims' hymn, which is in a regular triple meter and again is in a slower tempo than Wolfram's passages which preceded it (*Moderato - ritard. - Andante maestoso*). The stately manner of the pilgrims' music is contrasted with the *parlando* of Wolfram and Elisabeth in a style clearly more appropriate for operatic recitative. Although the regular iambic rhythm of the chorus is more interesting than their music had been in Act One as they began their pilgrimage, it is the rapid delivery of the other two characters' text that catches the listener's attention. As the chorus is to begin singing offstage, one has the sense that they and their music are indeed part of the scenery of the Wartburg valley.

The representation of archaic-sounding music in *Tannhäuser* has the important common feature of rhythmic sterility. The pilgrims' music in Act One lacks much rhythmic interest and moves predominantly in equal note values. In Act Three, the pilgrims' chorus trudges along in a regular rhythmic pattern. Wagner was probably

inspired in the former case by either the chorale or psalmody, his carefully balanced phrases evidently suggesting the former. In the second example from the opera, assuming he wanted to recreate something of an "authentic" sound, he had in his Dresden library Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen's massive encyclopedic overview *Minnesinger. Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1838-61) that does indeed include musical examples of *Minnelieder*.[10] Here Wagner encountered not only all known (up to that time) *Minnesinger* texts and melodies but also Hagen's detailed essay ("Ueber die Musik der Minnesinger") for how his diplomatic transcriptions might be realized in performance.

Although Hagen does note that one is not limited by the overriding metrical feet of the text or even its poetic meter, he maintains that the latter can aid in selecting an appropriate modern meter (such as $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, etc.) for performance of this repertoire. However, one may slip in and out of various meters as necessary, of course. In his view, it is preferable to follow the pattern of the poem, whether it be dactylic, trochaic, or iambic, so long as one does not allow these patterns to disrupt the periodicity of the original, whose accent pattern should not be violated.[11] Hagen goes on to discuss notational cues as well, such as the possible ramifications of different square-shape note values. All of this is speculation, as he is quick to admit, but Hagen does advance tentative theories for what the manuscripts may be suggesting. However, his few

[10] Westernhagen, 98. Wagner did not own the last volume, which postdates his time in Dresden.

[11] Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, ed., *Minnesinger. Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, aus alten bekannten Handschriften und früheren Drucken gesammelt und berichtigt, mit der Lesarten derselben, Geschichte des Lebens der Dichter und ihrer Werke, Sangweisen der Lieder, Reimverzeichnis der Anfänge, und Abbildungen sämmtlicher Handschriften* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1838), vol. 4, 853-54.

examples in modern notation are all in common time with very little rhythmic variety (and chordal accompaniment), and Hagen is clearly more interested in presenting possibilities and options than rules.

As this instance in Act Three of *Tannhäuser* is the only time that the pilgrims' hymn is sung homophonically in harmony and unaccompanied, Wagner could have been following Hagen's suggestions or, just as easily, been thinking of chorale style here as well. Yet, if the latter is the case, one wonders why the composer so emphatically relied on iambic rhythm throughout this passage in contrast to his description of chorale style elsewhere as being "rhythmically completely unaccented" in terms of its character. Here Wagner would seem to have been following the proposal Hagen made for following the metrical cues in the text itself, although in this case the text was also his own creation.

At any rate, despite his somewhat contradictory later admission that he "had not yet arrived at any close study of medieval poetry" by the time he finished the libretto in April 1843,[12] there can be no doubt that Wagner did consult sources for *Minnelieder* and stories of its practitioners as he prepared the basic plot for *Tannhäuser*. Hagen's copy of the texts from the fourteenth-century *Manessische Sammlung* (volumes 1 and 2 of his collection, 1838) includes the story (as *Sangspruchgedichte*) of one "Kling[e]sor von Ungerland, (Krieg auf Wartburg)" ["Kling(e)sor of Hungary, (The Battle in the Wartburg)]" Here, all the characters present in the Act Two *Sängerkrieg* in *Tannhäuser* are also to be found: Heinrich von Ofterdingen (Tannhäuser?), Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Reimar der Alte, Biterolf, der tugendhafte

[12] ML, 259.

Schreiber [the virtuous scribe], and the aforementioned Klingsor (spelled alternately with or without the central E).[13] Whether or not Wagner perused this material in Hagen, there can be no doubt he was aware of it according to his own account in *Mein Leben*:

> … [Samuel] Lehrs brought me the annual proceedings of the Königsberg Germanic Society, which included Lukas's critical study of the "Wartburg War," even giving the text in the original language. Although I could use virtually none of the material from this authentic version for my own purposes, it nonetheless showed me the German Middle Ages in a significant coloring I had not yet dreamed of. [14]

C. T. L. Lucas had attempted in 1838 to demonstrate that Heinrich von Ofterdingen and the real-life Tannhäuser (ca. 1205-70) were the same individual. This view was soon discounted, however. Nonetheless, Wagner refers to his Tannhäuser by the first name Heinrich in his libretto and does indeed conflate the two stories.

Again, Westernhagen's catalog of Wagner's Dresden library reveals many other medieval literary sources, some of which also touch on the *Tannhäuser* topic to some extent. Wagner possessed collections of poetry, *romans*, sagas, fairy tales, histories, and mythologies. Among these were *Das Amelunglied*, old Swedish and Danish folk songs and ballads, Arthurian romances, a study of Provençal poetry, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, both *Eddas*, *Gesta romanorum*, Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*, various studies by the brothers Grimm, Godefrit Hagen's *Reimchronik der Stadt Cöln aus dem dreizehnten Jahrhundert*, the works of Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, an anonymous *Lohengrin* epic poem, *Das Nibelungenlied* in various editions, Snorri Sturlson's *Heimskringla*, Walther von der

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[13] Hagen, vol. 2, 3ff. This story is the first item in the second volume (bound with volume 1) and thus is certainly in a conspicuous enough location to have called attention to itself.

[14] ML, 212-13. See also the summary of Wagner's sources in *The Wagner Compendium*, 281.

Vogelweide's works in several editions, the *Vaula-Spá*, and many other translations of individual works by single authors as well as numerous anthologies. As a group, many of these sources the composer owned have received little scholarly attention in connection with Wagner's techniques, with efforts having been expended on his construction of the plots instead.

Although Wagner had just assumed his duties in Dresden when he finished the libretto for *Tannhäuser*, it seems unlikely he acquired all these sources after the fact, especially as he cites several similar items previously in *Mein Leben*. Certainly his contact in Paris from 1839 with Samuel Lehrs and Gottfried Engelbert Anders (1795-1866), who worked at the Bibliothèque Nationale, provided Wagner with access to many new sources he would use in subsequent projects.[15] However, he does maintain that it was only the establishment of a permanent home on his appointment at the Dresden court that allowed him the leisure finally to engage in such endeavors in any great systematic fashion. This evidently led to the eye for detail he demonstrated by the time of preparations for the first performances in 1845, when he had an edition of the vocal score published

> decked out in a manner appropriate to the opera's medieval character, and for this reason I had my Leipzig printer use special gothic lettertype for the printing of the text, a not insignificant increase in the total cost … A number of excellent stage sets produced for Dresden by the best scene-painters at the Opéra in Paris, which, compared to the usual style of German stage decor, looked like authentic art works of the highest order, had given me the idea of persuading Lüttichau to have the *Tannhäuser* scenery done by the same painters. The order had been given, and the negotiations with the Parisian painter [Edouard Désiré Joseph] Despléchin had already been carried out the previous autumn. All my requests were approved, including those pertaining to the provision of lovely and historically accurate medieval costumes according to the design of my friend [Ferdinand] Heine … all circumstances seemed favorably united in a focal point and cast a hopeful light on the production of my new work which was scheduled to open the autumn season.

[15] ML, 170ff.

> There was a good deal of excitement about it as well; for the first time I saw myself favorably mentioned in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, and they spoke of the high expectations aroused by my new opera, whose text had been written "with an indisputably poetic understanding."[16]

It seems unlikely that a composer so intent on recreating a medieval atmosphere for his work would have neglected the final element in recreating a past era, archaic- if not entirely authentic-sounding music.

As ambiguous as *Tannhäuser* is with respect to the derivation of its seemingly antiquated styles, *Die Meistersinger* provides an unequivocal example of the style found in chorales. Here, Wagner presents a clear-cut example of the unremarkable nature of the rhythmic activity of chorales at the opening of the First Act. Again, he contrasts his newly composed chorale with chamber-like writing for soloists in the orchestra, representing the glances between Walther von Stolzing and Eva Pogner during the service (Example 4). Although the tempo remains the same as that of the prelude [*Im Zeitmaß des Vorspiels. (Mäßig.)*], which does not end but merely gives way to the stage music of the chorale as the curtain opens, the stately, regular rhythm of the congregation could hardly seem more static compared to the anxious and increasingly more rhythmically complex motives afforded to Walther as he gazes at Eva. Suddenly, the complex theoretical concept of gesture becomes clear in practice here, as the gaps in the chorale filled by the pantomime allow the orchestra to carry the action forward in what would otherwise be a static scene.

The juxtaposition of the fledgling couples' motives with the chorale melody also serves to encapsulate the plot, as the chorale not only stands for tradition and

[16] ML, 301-2.

conservatism, but it is also based on the Meistersingers' motive heard at the opening of the opera in the prelude. Also included here in the recreation of a Protestant service is an overt reference to the Bar form (*a a b*) of many chorales, with an incomplete return of the *a* material (cf. "Da zu dir der Heiland kam" and "Daß wir durch sein Tauf uns weihn"). Even Lorenz allowed for this return in his otherwise aberrant and willful analysis of the chorale as *Bogen* form (*a b a*) with coda, a reading which only has its apparent balance in the main section of the chorale to recommend it (8 + 8 + 8, + 11 measures).[17] Evidently, for Lorenz, the past Wagner was imitating here was the style of Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium*, BWV 248. Lorenz hears the gapped presentation of the chorale with instrumental interludes as being similar in design, if admittedly not in affect, to the concluding chorale of Part 2 of Bach's work, "Wir singen dir in deinem Heer."

Although Lorenz is quick to point out similar techniques are to be found in other cantatas by Bach as well, one wishes Lorenz had noted that a more appropriate and fruitful comparison would have been between his Bach example and Wagner's use of the shepherd's pipe with the chorale-like material in Act One of *Tannhäuser* discussed previously. Finally, and perhaps most amazingly, Lorenz seems to have overlooked in this instance the fact that the same Bar form is a fundamental feature of *Meisterlieder*, and as has so often been pointed out by Lorenz himself and many other commentators, Wagner's opera itself taken as a whole falls somewhat freely into this form.[18] His free use of it here thus serves to encapsulate not only the drama but also its musical

[17] Alfred Lorenz, *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*, vol. 3, *Der musikalische Aufbau von Richard Wagners "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"* (Berlin: Max Hesse, 1931), 34.

[18] Lorenz, vol. 3, 9-10 and 172.

realization. That Wagner's supposedly sixteenth-century Lutheran chorale is obviously closer stylistically to Bach's arrangements and that the Bar form is severely compressed signify that Wagner was less concerned with absolute verisimilitude than with recreating the aura of a past epoch.

This freedom in approach even extends to the words being sung in Wagner's libretto. The composer could have used an authentic chorale text he found in Wackernagel or another similar source. Instead, as Arthur Groos has suggested, it seems Wagner chose to paraphrase the first stanza of Luther's hymn "Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam" from 1541:[19]

LUTHER	WAGNER
Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam nach seines Vaters Willen, von Sanct Johann's die Taufe nahm, sein Werk und Amt zu 'füllen; da wollt' er stiften uns ein Bad, zu waschen uns von Sünden, ersäufen auch den bittern Tod durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden, so galt ein neues Leben.	Da zu dir der Heiland kam, willig deine Taufe nahm, weihte sich dem Opfertod, gab er uns des Heil's Gebot: daß wir durch sein' Tauf' uns weih'n, seine Opfers wert zu sein. Edler Täufer! Christ's Vorläufer! Nimm uns gnädig an, dort am Fluß Jordan![20]
[Christ our Lord came to the Jordan, According to His Father's will, And took baptism from Saint John In order to carry out his work and office; There he wanted to found a bath for us To wash away our sins, And to drown bitter death Through His own blood and wounds To give new life.]	[When the Savior came to you, Willingly taking your baptism, Dedicated Himself to a sacrificial death, He gave to us a covenant for salvation: That we dedicate ourselves through His baptism To be worthy of His sacrifice. Noble baptizer! Christ's predecessor! Receive us graciously, There on the River Jordan!]

[19] Arthur Groos, "Constructing Nuremburg: Typological and Proleptic Communities in *Die Meistersinger*," *19th-Century Music* 16/1 (summer 1992): 21.

[20] GS 7, 151. In the penultimate line, the version Wagner set is given, not the version in GS, which reads "Nimm uns freundlich an."

Wagner has changed the point of view from that of Christ in Luther's poem to John the Baptist in order to emphasize the setting of his opera around the saint's feast day. As Groos notes, Wagner evidently lifted words, phrases, and even rhymes from Luther. Wagner was almost certainly familiar with at least one of Bach's settings of this chorale (using the melody by Johann Walther): the cantata (BWV 7), the chorale itself (BWV 280), or a chorale prelude (BWV 684 and 685).[21] Wagner did possess the first volume of cantatas from the Bach Gesellschaft edition (published 1851), which does indeed include BWV 7;[22] his library did also include other editions of some of Bach's cantatas as well. Finally, as Groos suggests, this may indeed have been the work Wagner read through on Tuesday, 13 July 1869 when Cosima refers to a work by Bach by a title that does not otherwise correspond with any work in his oeuvre: "R. takes up the Bach motet '*Als Christus zum Jordan kam*' — it moves us deeply. 'The main thing is to put people at ease, to bring religious meditation companionably close to the heart, and the artist then decorates it further with his skill.'"[23]

In later years, as he played through chorales for his own enjoyment, Wagner commented variously on what he saw as being significant features of the genre. For

[21] Groos, 22. The same chorale melody (with a different text) is featured in the last movement of the cantata "Es ist ein trotzig und verzagt Ding," BWV 176, but its placement in volume thirty-five (published 1888) of the Bach Gesellschaft edition makes it impossible for Wagner to have had access to it in its first published edition.

[22] Wagner had acquired three Gesellschaft volumes of cantatas (BWV 1-30 and 30a), along with separate publications of Bach's complete motets and the cantata "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," BWV 80 (not yet published by the Bach Gesellschaft), from the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel in July 1869. (See Geck, 129 and 133.)

[23] CTa, 125; Groos, 22. As Cosima often got titles and even quotations from both her father's and husband's works wrong, this slip here concerning the title and genre designation of Bach's cantata need not worry the reader.

example, on Sunday, 2 March 1873, he and Cosima spent some time contemplating the musical works of Luther in an edition by Wackernagel with illustrations, noting that they were "deeply affected by the tone of these songs."[24] Several years later, on Saturday, 27 July 1878, she includes a diary entry that perhaps explains why Wagner composed his own chorales for both *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger* rather than quoting preexisting melodies: "Played through some chorales in the evening; R. prefers the stark form of Luther's '*Ein' feste Burg*' to any of its later arrangements, even the one by Bach. He finds the modernization of old German songs distasteful."[25] As chorale-like writing also plays a part in his last work, *Parsifal* (premiered on 26 July 1882 in Bayreuth), it is not surprising he would comment candidly to Cosima on Monday, 16 October 1882 that "rhythm is a completely new discovery, a Luther chorale contains hardly any rhythm, though it is splendidly declaimed; and he reminds me of the tarantella we saw danced in Capri, how unrhythmic and unclear the music was."[26] The dances of Capri were wild and confusing for Wagner, while the Lutheran chorale, though not particularly inspired rhythmically in his view, was at least sufficient for clear textual declamation.

As noted previously, Wagner equated the style of chorales with the Middle Ages and the rhythmic sterility of the music he knew from that era. In his mind this was a crucial trait that made early sacred music different from both folk music and cultivated traditions of later periods. Especially from the time of *Oper und Drama* on, the music of the folk was for him the means of Western music's redemption from the rhythmic

[24] CTa, 600.
[25] CTb, 123.
[26] CTb, 931.

sterility of medieval music. One of the reasons why Wagner drew so heavily on medieval German sources was his strong sense that these products of essentially common people in advantageous positions created a meaningful nationalistic spirit:

> … I read R. the little essay on the mastersingers and the minnesingers, which leads us to talk about the Middles Ages, so wonderfully harmonious and full of life, when a knight could neither read nor write, yet was a poet![27]

> R. today expounds at length on the merit of the knights, who cannot be too highly praised, for they wrote German in an age when all edicts and everything else were in Latin. "They did it out of pride, and this pride is splendid."[28]

> … the *Nibelungenlied* still makes a powerful impact on us (particularly the second part). Whoever wrote it was greater than Wolfram [von Eschenbach], because he was inspired by folk poetry and by figures close to the common people, Wolfram by foreign influence; the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* was on his own home ground.[29]

There can be no doubt as to why the *Nibelungenlied* was on Wagner's mind at this point in 1873, as he was still occupied with completing the *Ring* and organizing the first Bayreuth Festival which was eventually to take place in 1876. His reflection on ancient law was inspired by an otherwise unremarkable letter he had received concerning a fine point of semantics in the libretto of *Lohengrin* regarding the wording of the "Frageverbot."[30] He had also just received his own copy of Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* (1828) a few days earlier,[31] a work which he had consulted in connection with the legal proceedings in that opera.[32] Finally, on Saturday, 1 March 1873, *Die Meistersinger* had been performed in Munich as a benefit for the Bayreuth

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[27] CTa, 602; entry for Thursday, 6 March 1873. The "little essay" mentioned is not further identified.

[28] CTa, 647; entry for Wednesday, 18 June 1873.

[29] CTa, 652; entry for Wednesday, 2 July 1873.

[30] CTa, 647.

[31] CTa, 646; entry for Monday, 16 June 1873.

[32] ML, 328.

endeavor.[33] All of these historical references were very much on the composer's mind as he continued with his own best efforts to project a German national identity through an appropriation of folk-like stylistic traits in his works based on German legends and myths.

Especially in *Lohengrin*, Wagner took great pride in having conjured up the aura of the Middle Ages through a combination of various elements, not the least of which being the various musical trappings of the past he included. Decades after he had created the opera, as it went on to enjoy an international success, Wagner commented privately to his wife on Friday, 6 June 1879 about what he felt he achieved in this work:

> When we are alone upstairs, R. tells me he wants to say something that sounds very much like self-praise: he has been thinking of *Lohengrin* and has come to the conclusion that in it he has provided a complete portrait of the Middle Ages. Among other things he mentions the sentries sounding their trumpets, and also the preceding fight.[34]

There is good reason that the trumpet calls in Act Two, Scene Three stood out in the composer's mind, for he had the rare opportunity of being almost literally transported back into the world of the opera by his patron King Ludwig II. During a period of separation from the then still-married Cosima, Wagner stayed with Ludwig from 11 to 18 November 1865 at his medieval-revival castle Hohenschwangau in the Bavarian countryside. While there, Wagner quoted from his opera and described his feelings in his *Brown Book* on 12 November:

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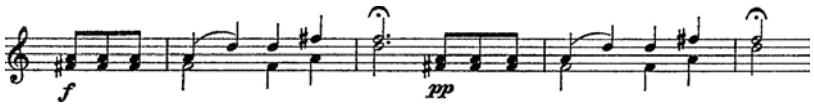
[33] CTa, 200; entry for Sunday, 2 March 1873.
[34] CTb, 319.



> Thus it sounds from one tower and is answered from another: the clearest sky the sun golden; the castle gleams — That is magic! …. When I look like this out my grand Crown-Princely window at the beautiful country: hear Lohengrin's greetings reverberating at me from the battlements, feel the joy, the gratitude of a kind King which I earn myself by a warm word, — I think of the wonderful woman who lovingly awaits me there …[35]

The stage directions in the *Lohengrin* libretto obviously inspired this reenactment: "Allmählicher Tagesanbruch. Zwei Wächter blasen von Turme das Morgenlied; von einem entfernteren Turme hört man antworten." ["Gradual daybreak. Two watchmen play the morning song from the tower; from a distant tower an answer is heard."]

The tradition of *Turmmusik* [tower music] was still being practiced in Leipzig in the nineteenth century during Wagner's time there, according to Gunter Hempel.[36] The medieval tradition of playing courtly fanfares to mark the time of day, special occasions, communicate the fact that there was important news, etc., had much changed by Bach's time, when chorales appropriate to the liturgical season would be played from the towers of the Thomas and Nicolai churches during the day.[37] Even when this slowly fell out of fashion by Wagner's time, the city continued to employ *Stadtpfeifer* and *Kunstgeiger*. Gradually, these virtuosi were absorbed into both church orchestras and independent ensembles that could be hired for various festivities, both religious and secular. Eventually, choral associations were added to the roster of local ensembles. The other professional musicians in Leipzig were increasingly employed by the Gewandhaus

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[35] *The Brown Book*, 82.

[36] Gunter Hempel, "Das Ende der Leipziger Ratsmusik im 19. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 15/3 (1958): 188ff.

[37] Hempel, 188.

Orchestra, other concert associations, and public theaters and opera houses, while some few retained court/government positions. Although Hempel has focused his attention on Leipzig, what went on there was similar to conditions across Germany in towns of any appreciable size.[38] What never changed was the prevalent access to public music-making of this type.[39]

Although the tradition of having the musicians play from towers had become passé in the nineteenth century, Wagner not only resurrected it in *Lohengrin*, he also kept it alive in Bayreuth by having a small brass ensemble announce each upcoming act by playing motives he selected. For the first festival in 1876 at which the *Ring* received its premiere, the ensemble of trumpets and trombones stood next to the theater. When Wagner added a portico and reception room, above which was a small balcony outside the Festspielhaus, for the use of King Ludwig II in 1882, the brass ensemble often was positioned on the balcony to make it easier to hear above the members of the audience who would assemble outside the theater before performances. This practice has continued to this day.[40]

Wagner had already attached another importance to this same passage and that which follows it in the Second Act of *Lohengrin*. As the opera had just enjoyed a tremendous success in Bologna in the fall of 1871, Wagner wrote two short letters concerning the success of this production. One was addressed to the librettist and

[38] Hempel, 187.

[39] Hempel, 197.

[40] See Robert Hartford, ed., *Bayreuth: The Early Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 35. Hartford quotes numerous accounts by attendees such as Tchaikovsky and Grieg (in 1876) and Humperdinck and Weingartner (in 1882), which mention the fanfares. Despite these accommodations for Ludwig, he decided not to attend the performances of *Parsifal* in 1882.

composer Arrigo Boito (1842-1918) and subsequently published as "Brief an einen italienischen Freund über die Aufführung des 'Lohengrin' in Bologna" ["Letter to an Italian Friend on the Performance of 'Lohengrin' in Bologna"] (letter dated 7 November 1871).[41] The other followed nearly a year later in an open letter published in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* when the freedom of the city was bestowed upon Wagner in "Schreiben an der Bürgermeister von Bologna" ["Letter to the Mayor of Bologna"]. In both, Wagner expresses what he sees as a major difference between Italian opera and his new type of German musical drama: Italian melody was composed with the aim of exploiting the virtuosity of the human voice, whereas Germans preferred less cultivated styles and to explore the possibilities afforded by their own national heritage. Wagner wrote to Boito that in contrast to Goethe, who had returned to Germany from Italy only with some regret,

> daß ich den naiven Volksgesang, welchen noch Goethe auf den Straßen hörte, nicht mehr vernahm, und dagegen den heimkehrenden Arbeiter des Nachts in den gleichen affektirten und weichlich kadenzirten Opernphrasen sich ergehen hörte, von denen ich nicht glaube, daß der männliche Genius Ihrer Nation sie entgegeben hat, — aber auch nicht der weibliche![42]
>
> [that I no longer heard the naive folk song that Goethe had heard in the streets, and in its place I heard the nighttime worker indulging in the same affected and effeminately cadencing operatic phrases that I can't believe the masculine genius of your nation had produced — and yet, not even the feminine!]

Folk music was natural and unaffected for Wagner; Italian operatic melodies were trite and unnatural, even inhuman, to the point that they represented neither man nor woman.

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[41] Wagner's original intention had been to write an open letter for publication in 1871, but instead he asked Boito to extend his wishes to his fellow Italians. (See CTa, 429; entries for 5 and 6 November 1871.) This letter was evidently published in the *Norddeutsche Zeitung* in late 1871 at any rate.

[42] GS 9, 290.

Perhaps the castrato tradition and its bizarre musical effect in Italian opera was in the back of Wagner's mind.

It is in connection with his position on folk music that Wagner described the process by which he transformed the fanfares from Act Two of *Lohengrin*, which he had heard played so evocatively at Hohenschwangau, when he told his wife "I wanted in fact to show how a folk song evolves."[43] In the Third Scene, the castle is being prepared for the wedding celebrations of Lohengrin and Elsa von Brabant, with various servants arriving to perform their daily tasks, fanfares being played, and noble guests arriving. It is during this pantomime that Wagner develops the fanfares first into a rhythmic portrayal of increasing activity, using free imitation and then ever more abstract developments of the rhythm. Eventually he creates a rousing double chorus of anticipation of the day's promised events ("In Früh'n versammelt uns der Ruf") based on the original fanfare motive (Example 5).

From the simplest of motives in the fanfare, Wagner creates various different depictions of activity. He relies on rhythmic and melodic components, as well as the contour to breathe life into this scene, without resorting to new, contrasting material to guide its course until well into the chorus itself. One now understands Wagner's description of how a folk song could be taken up by the people, as he exploited what at first was an extremely simple and folk-like melody to build an entire vignette of medieval life, with the people literally taking up what he referred to as a folk song. Thus, the composer equates the simple fanfares written as though they were to be played on natural

[43] CTa, 429; entry for Monday, 6 November 1871.

trumpets with folk music and shows how such a melody might be developed from its simplest form to build up an entire scene.

In summary, for the recreation of the Middle Ages Wagner relies to a great extent on what he saw as folk-like music in addition to the various genres of sacred music of that time. Rhythm (or lack thereof, for some religious styles) was a dominant feature in the melodic style of this undertaking. That he would rely on a product of the Reformation, the chorale, to depict the same era is of course an anachronism, but his reason for doing so was again a nationalistic one. He likens the German mentality with respect to music with a description of the fundamentals of the early Reformers in his letter to Boito:

> Daß die Deutschen seit hundert Jahren einen so ungemeinen Einfluß auf die Ausbildung der von den Italienern überkommenen *Musik* gewannen, kann — physiologisch betrachtet — unter Anderem auch durchaus erklärbar erscheinen, daß sie, des verführerischen Antriebes einer natürlich melodischen Stimmbegabung entbehrend, die *Tonkunst* etwa mit dem gleichen tiefgehenden Ernste aufzufassen genöthigt waren, wie ihre Reformatoren die Religion der heiligen Evangelien, welche sie nicht aus dem berauscheden Glanze üppiger kirchlicher Ceremonien, unter Entsagungen aller Art kräftig leidende Seele der Menschheit innig zu erkennen berufen waren.[44]
>
> [That the Germans for the last hundred years have won such an uncommon influence on the development of *music*, brought over by the Italians, may be explained in part — physiologically considered — by the fact that they, lacking the tempting impetus of a naturally melodic vocal talent, necessarily comprehended *composition* with something of the same deeply moving seriousness their Reformers had for the religion of the Holy Gospels, which called to them not with the enticing brilliance of luxuriant church ceremonies but to appreciate heartily the suffering soul deeply through all sorts of renunciations.]

Abjuring the sensuousness of *bel canto* for honest yet simple melodic construction was a means for Wagner to project a different national identity in his works, even when he had to resort to anachronisms in doing so, as in *Tannhäuser*. This fact was obviously overlooked by those who believed in 1848 that Wagner was in league with contemporary

[44] GS 9, 290.

Catholic reformers for his glorification of that religion in *Tannhäuser*, "as it was supposedly obvious that, just as Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* was designed to glorify Protestantism, my *Tannhäuser* was supposed to do the same for Catholicism."[45] This misguided intrigue against Wagner of course did not keep his opera from reaching the stage in Dresden, but it does perhaps suggest that he had either so convincingly integrated the various stylistic elements in this work that few people recognized the influence of chorales at the time or that they simply were not derived from chorale style and thus were not recognized as such. If the latter is indeed the case, against most subsequent opinions, the argument for other derivations of these elements from other medieval genres is all the more compelling and necessary.

Where Wagner limits himself to less ideologically weighted stylistic influences from the Middle Ages, as in the trumpet calls in *Lohengrin*, he is indeed even more free to integrate them into the drama. Just as he relied on obvious rhythmic characteristics in contrast to the static sacred genres he imitated, rhythmic profiles were of paramount importance to Wagner in recreating a folk style. He uses hunting horns with increasing integration in both *Tannhäuser* (Act One) and *Tristan und Isolde* (Act Two), for example. This idea is abstracted even further in the *Ring* where Hunding's motive is transformed from a highly rhythmic, yet still melodic, version to pure rhythm in *Die Walküre* (Example 6). References to Hunding are accomplished through the use of this motive throughout Acts One and Two. It eventually turns up as a merely rhythmic hunting call, devoid of any melody. Also, its rhythmic relationship to the motive first heard when

[45] ML, 313.

Wotan speaks of Hagen's conception in Act Two is tellingly obvious (Example 7). Despite the fact that this compound motive is derived from completely different melodic material, the primacy of rhythm in the profile of all these examples suggests Wagner was again thinking of the immediate and primal communicative nature of rhythm in helping to conjure up the image of a somewhat barbaric age, yet one which was romanticized for its relatively less complicated way of life. Various other motivic material such as that for the Nibelungs and Giants in *Das Rheingold* are principally rhythmic in nature as well.

The Renaissance

If for medieval and folk references Wagner relied to a great extent on rhythmic profiles in his melodic construction, when referring to the Renaissance, his attention turned to harmony and especially the development of counterpoint. For Wagner writing in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, there was a necessary link between the relationship of speech and melody that made the creation of harmony all but a given: As words lost the power they shared in their union with music, a new means of organization was necessary. This would have to take into account the new development of harmony, which, although a natural phenomenon, was not so easily understood. Thus, through ingenuity, a new and sophisticated technique developed in music that ultimately removed it from its original communicative nature:

> Der Kontrapunkt, in seinen mannigfaltigen Geburten und Ausgeburten, ist das künstliche Mitsichselbstspielen der Kunst, die Mathematik des Gefühles, der mechanische Rhythmus der egoistischen Harmonie. In seiner Erfindung gefiel sich die abstrakte Tonkunst dermaaßen, daß sie

> sich einzig und allein als absolute, für sich bestehende Kunst ausgab; — als Kunst, die durchaus keinem menschlichen Berdürfnisse, sondern rein *sich*, ihrem absoluten göttlichen Wesen, ihr Dasein verdanke. Der Willkürliche dünkt sich ganz natürlich auch der absolut Alleinberechtigte. Ihrer eigenen Willkür allein hatte aber allerdings auch die Musik nur ihr selbständiges Gebahren zu danken, denn einem *Seelenbedürfnisse* zu entsprechen waren jene tonmechanischen, kontrapunktlichen Kunstwerkstücke durchaus unfähig. In ihrem Stolze war daher die Musik zu ihrem geraden Gegentheile geworden: aus einer *Herzens*angelegenheit zur *Verstandes*sache, aus Ausdrucke unbegränzter christlicher Gemüthssehnsucht zum Rechnenbuche moderner Börsenspekulation.[46]
>
> [Counterpoint, in its manifold forms and offshoots, is an artificial solitary game for art, the mathematics of feeling, the mechanic rhythm of the egoistic harmony. With its invention, abstract composition passed itself off as the one and only absolute art — an art that owed its existence not to any human necessity, but completely to *itself* and its absolutely divine nature. That which is arbitrary quite naturally considers itself to be absolutely legitimate. Music had only to thank its own whims for this self-sufficient outgrowth, for those mechanical, contrapuntal works of art were completely incapable of answering any *needs of the soul*. In its pride music became its own direct antithesis: from a matter of the *heart* to a thing of *reason*, from an expression of an unbound Christian soul longing to an account book for modern market speculation.]

The commodification of music, somewhat overstated here as a moneymaking venture for either late Medieval or early Renaissance composers, was a problematic issue for the revolutionary Wagner. This attitude clearly grew out of his socialist inclinations, the same factor that eventually resulted in his forced exile from Saxony. However, he spent most of his life seeking out remuneration for his music and music making. His position as expressed here certainly belies another even more crucial issue for the composer, that of an organized religion's place as a mediator for the individual.

As far as Wagner the revolutionary was concerned, there was a hypocritical attitude in the Church towards art. Although there was at least some recognition of ancient culture and its achievements in the Middle Ages, rather than foster some sort of reunification of the arts as Wagner visualized, he maintains in *Die Kunst und die Revolution* that the Church willfully capitalized on the fragmentation: "Die Pfaffen

[46] GS 3, 88.

bemächtigten sich der Rhetorik für die Kanzeln, der Musik für den Kirchenchor; und es arbeitete sich die neue Handwerkswelt tüchtig in die einzelnen Künste der Griechen hinein, so weit sie ihr verständlich und zweckmäßig erschienen." ["The priests seized upon rhetoric for the pulpit, music for the church choir; and the new world of craftsmanship toiled away at the individual arts of the Greeks, as far as they were comprehensible and purposeful for them."][47] Even as artists in all fields took their inspiration from the ancient heathens in the Renaissance, the Church also hypocritically took up the "newly awakened artistic impulse."[48] Thus, humanism was taken up by those who had initially been opposed to the entire notion.

Nonetheless, Wagner eventually softened his views and recognized the importance of the advances made by church-educated composers in the field of polyphonic music by the time of *"Zukunftsmusik."* He notes that in the Renaissance painting and, to an even greater degree, music surpassed all the heights they reached in classical antiquity. Wagner credits the Church with rehabilitating the expressive nature of music through the inventions first of harmony and subsequently of counterpoint. As one will recall, this is where he also mentions that harmony was a novel invention of the modern era. The continuation of this idea shows a rather more sympathetic stance than Wagner had expressed in the heat of the failed Dresden revolution: "Die dem Althertume gänzlich unbekannte Harmonie, ihre undenklich reiche Erweiterung und Anwendung durch Polyphonie sind die Erfindung und das eigenthümlichste Werk der neueren

[47] GS 3, 29.
[48] GS 3, 17.

Jahrhunderte." ["Harmony which was entirely unknown to the ancients and its inconceivably rich expansion through polyphony are the invention and the peculiar achievement of the recent centuries."][49] Similarly, in concluding that the loss of rhythm in both Catholic chant and Protestant chorales could only be answered by an equally fortuitous discovery, Wagner continues his previously cited discussion of that topic:

> Den Ausdruck der Melodie, seinem innersten Sinne gemäß, zu heben, erfand nun aber der christliche Geist die vielstimmige Harmonie auf der Grundlage des vierstimmigen Akkordes bedungen hatte. Zu welch' wundervoll innigem, bis dahin nie und in keiner Weise gekanntem Ausdrucke die melodische Phrase hierdurch gelangte, ersehen wir mit stets neuer Ergriffenheit aus den ganz unvergleichlichen Meisterwerken der italienischen Kirchenmusik. Die verschiedenen Stimmen, welche ursprünglich nur bestimmt waren, den untergelegten harmonische Akkord mit der Note der Melodie zugleich zu Gehör zu bringen, erhielten hier endlich selbst eine frei und ausdrucksvoll fortschreitende Entwickelung, so daß mit Hilfe der sogenannten kontrapunktlichen Kunst jede dieser, der eigentlichen Melodie (dem sogenannten *Canto fermo*) untergelegten Stimmen mit selbständigem Ausdruck sich bewegte, wodurch, eben in den Werken der hochgeweihtesten Meister, ein solcher kirchlicher Gesang in seinem Vortrage eine so wunderbare, das Herz bis in das tiefste Innere erregende Wirkung hervorbrachte, daß durchaus keine ähnliche Wirkung irgend einer anderen Kunst sich ihr vergleichen kann.[50]
>
> [To elevate the expression of melody, in accordance with its most intimate sense, the Christian spirit invented polyphonic harmony on the foundation implied by the four-voice chord. To what wonderfully heartfelt expression, which had never previously been known in any such fashion for a melodic phrase to attain hereby, we gather with an entirely new appreciation from the completely incomparable master works of Italian church music. The individual voices, which originally were only intended to intone the underlaid harmonic chord at the same time as the note of the melody, finally themselves thus reached a free and expressively advanced evolution in which with the help of the so-called contrapuntal art each of these voices laid under the actual melody (the so-called *Cantus firmus*) moved with its own independent expression. Thus in the works of the most highly praised masters, a sacred chant treated in this manner so miraculously brought out its exciting meaning to the deepest interior heart (of the listener) in such a way that absolutely no other such similar impression in any other art could possibly compare to it.]

Although it would be tempting to suppose Wagner's change of heart was due to an increase in his knowledge about music history, especially as it concerned Catholic polyphony of the Renaissance, Wagner already had some first-hand knowledge of Palestrina's music even before he began his post-revolutionary essays. In *Mein Leben* he

[49] GS 7, 105.
[50] GS 7, 106-7.

recounts a concert he gave in Dresden on 8 March 1848 as part of the new winter concert series he inaugurated as a Kapellmeister. The program still sounds astonishingly original today, even if the rationale behind it seems somewhat overly cautious in an age when concert-programming was somewhat random, to say the least:

> I had formed the opinion that if these concerts were to have any real distinction, by contrast with the usual heterogeneous assembly, offensive to any serious artistic taste, of numbers from every type of musical genre, there should be music from no more than two mutually complementary genres. My entire bill consisted of two symphonies and, between them, one or two large-scale but seldom heard vocal pieces. After a Mozart symphony (in D major), I had the orchestra leave the platform, to be replaced by an imposing group of singers, who performed Palestrina's *Stabat mater* in a style I had carefully prepared with them, and Bach's eight-part motet *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*; thereafter I had the orchestra resume their places to perform Beethoven's *Sinfonia Eroica* to end the concert.[51]

The centerpieces of the concert were the two choral works, which represented a departure on at least two levels at such a concert. First, choral works without independent instrumental parts inserted in the middle of what Wagner himself refers to as an orchestral concert would produce a striking effect. Second, contemporary symphonies which had recently become part of a newly forming canon of concert repertoire intended for public consumption were contrasted with classical works of the sacred choral repertoire, both of which continued to be performed in their original settings, the Thomaskirche for Bach and the Sistine Chapel for Palestrina, from the time of their composition through Wagner's time; thus, the new canon faced the old.

There is unity among these works as well, of course. Both Bach's motet (BWV 225), dating from early in his Leipzig career in the 1720s, and Palestrina's setting of the

[51] ML, 358. Several symphonies by Mozart are in the key of D major. Assuming it was a later work, as these were far better known then as well as today, the most likely candidates are K. 297 ("Paris"), 385 ("Haffner"), or 504 ("Prague"). Any of these symphonies by Mozart would seem appropriate given the other works on Wagner's program. Although the account in *Mein Leben* says the concert took place in January, it in fact occurred on 8 March 1848. (For this dating, see *The Wagner Compendium*, 323.)

sequence text, dating from the time of his appointment to the papal choir in the 1550s, are for double choirs in eight parts (SATB + SATB). It seems more than likely from Wagner's description that he "had the orchestra leave the platform" that no *basso continuo* or *colla parte* doublings were used in *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, bringing it in line with the purely vocal *Stabat mater*. Elsewhere, in his previously mentioned contemporary essay "Entwurf zur Organisation eines deutschen National-Theaters," Wagner says specifically that only the organ should be used to accompany vocal music in the churches of Dresden,[52] further supporting the supposition that his choral selections in this concert would have used this instrument at most. Moreover, since he often worked with other vocal ensembles in Dresden during his time there according to his accounts in his autobiography, it seems unlikely that his choir on this evening was part of the official Kapelle, meaning a separation of the two ensembles was probably necessary for professional reasons as well.

Stylistically, the two symphonies certainly would have demonstrated a greater homogeneity than the two choral works, which is hardly surprising considering the closer chronological and geographical connections between Mozart and Beethoven than those between Palestrina and Bach. Whereas Bach's motet uses a variety of textures and polychoral effects, Palestrina's shows a greater amount of restraint and a tendency towards homorhythmic writing, allowing for the lengthy text being set. For example, Bach makes use of rigorous fugal writing in both the opening and final movement of his work, while Palestrina limits his imitation and free polyphony to very short passages and

[52] GS 2, 256.

often subjugates the use of such techniques to his preference for clarity in the declamation of the text. Also, in the central second movement Bach combines a chorale in one choir with aria-like writing for the other, the two alternating back and forth in a dialog not unlike what has been examined above in *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger*. Taking a radically different approach, Palestrina uses his choirs, which would have been in close proximity to each other, to create intricate terraces of sound, not unlike composers soon afterward began doing with increasing regularity, especially in Venice. These dynamic changes were certainly the most prominent features of Palestrina's work in Wagner's mind, as the young composer first referred to them in reviewing a Parisian performance of Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* in *Revue et Gazette musicale* on 11 October 1840, "'Stabat Mater' de Pergolèse, arrangé pour grand orchestre avec choeurs par Alexis Lvoff":

> Beyond dispute the most audacious step in M. Lvoff's undertaking is the addition of choruses, since Pergolesi wrote his *Stabat* for but two voices, the one soprano and the other high contralto. Strictly speaking, it would have been better to respect the original intention of the master; but as this introduction of choruses has in no way spoilt the work, and as, moreover, the two original solo parts have been preserved in their integrity, it would be impossible to seriously blame the adaptor; in fact one must even acknowledge that he has added to the richness of the ensemble, for this adjunction has been effected with a rare address and a superior understanding of the text.
>
> Thus in the first number the intermittent fusion of the choral with the solo voices reminds us happily of the manner in which the two choirs are treated in Palestrina's *Stabat*. However it is principally upon the choir, that weighs the difficulty of adding complementary parts in the places aforesaid where Pergolesi has designed the melody exclusively for two or three. Here the arranger is obliged to restrict the role of the chorus to three parts at most, not to absolutely mar the original harmony and disfigure its noble simplicity. This is especially perceptible in the fugal passages, such as the *Fac ut ardeat*.[53]

Wagner's other statement in *Mein Leben* that he presented Palestrina's work "in a style I had carefully prepared with them" also requires some comment. As noted

[53] *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. and ed. William Ashton Ellis (London: Trubner, 1898; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), [vol. 7], 105-6.

previously, his edition of Palestrina's work was in fact published in 1878, making it possible to examine what changes he instituted. Wagner rescored the piece to allow for soloists in some passages and smaller sub-choirs in others. He also added characteristic nineteenth-century dynamic and accentuation markings. Importantly, he left Palestrina's harmonies and rhythms untouched, although the work is recast in modern notation to facilitate reading. Thus, the editorial additions Wagner included alter the original subtle polychoral effects and terraced dynamics to a great deal, while still preserving the essence of Palestrina's work (Example 8). Owing to the presumed differences in taste and performance practice, many of the dynamic alterations and added accents could be assumed in a nineteenth-century performance anyway.[54]

James Garratt mentions the not insignificant detail that Wagner's Palestrina arrangement was published due to Liszt's efforts decades after Wagner had prepared it for performance in Dresden. Wagner's interest in Palestrina's music predated the organized Caecilian efforts to publish early music in modern editions and was meant for concert performance as well as possible liturgical purposes in either Protestant or Catholic churches.[55] Although Garratt notes the importance of E. T. A. Hoffmann's essay "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik" (published in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 16, 1814) for summarizing much thought about what was wrong with contemporary church music, Hoffmann latches onto the *Missa Papae Marcelli* (published 1567) as the

[54] James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, netLibrary ed., Musical Performance and Reception (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 224ff.

[55] Garratt, 223-24.

paradigmatic example to which ecclesiastical music should strive,[56] whereas Wagner always clung to the *Stabat mater*.[57] Still, much of what Hoffmann found to praise in Palestrina was similar to Wagner's own observations: the Renaissance master's works were suitably pious and featured a "lofty inimitable simplicity and dignity [which] sank into a sort of elegance for which composers strove."[58]

By the time Wagner's Palestrina arrangement was published, so many newer editions of early music were available that Wagner certainly must have regarded his own as being of less consequence. For Liszt, Wagner's edition was not so much an arrangement as an aide to recreate the expressiveness expected in the performance of such works but naturally lacking in written/printed music of that earlier epoch. As such, Liszt considered Wagner's version of Palestrina's work to be a model for others:

> The contributions of the Reverend Father Canon Proske are certainly praiseworthy, and Pustet's editions of *Musica divina* (in Regensburg) are most excellent, but nevertheless I consider that new, helpful, practical editions of the old masters of church music remain desirable and salutary. Over thirty years ago Richard Wagner gave an eminent example of this, by arranging Palestrina's 'Stabat mater' for the Dresden *Hofkirche* with meticulous distribution between choir, semi-chorus, and soloists, and apposite details of nuances (crescendo, diminuendo, etc). Henceforth, may this example of the editing of the church father [*kirchenväterlichen*] composers be taken to heart and followed.[59]

That Liszt does not differentiate between Wagner's alterations to the vocal scoring and additions of dynamic and expressive markings suggests that he too was more interested in

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[56] Garratt, 40.

[57] In fact, towards the end of his life, Wagner did make critical comments about this Palestrina mass (see below).

[58] E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik," in *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Werke*, ed. Georg Ellinger (Berlin: n.d. [1894]), vol. 14, 40; translation based on "Old and New Church Music," in *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: "Kreisleriana," "The Poet and the Composer," Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); quoted in Garratt, 40. Wagner may have known Hoffmann's essay from the abbreviated version included in volume 2 (1819) of *Die Serapionsbrüder*.

[59] Franz Liszt, *Briefe*, ed. La Mara (Leipzig, 1905), vol. VII, pp. 329–30; quoted in Garratt, 226.

making this work available via modern performances than through the presentation of any sort of scholarly edition. Wagner's aims were thus more in line with many of the Caecilians than with any sort of musicological objectivity. Nonetheless, Wagner clearly was not involved in the main Caecilian agenda of divorcing modern music from liturgical use.[60]

There are other points of reference for Wagner's appreciation of Palestrina's style as well. Perhaps recalling the comparison he had made in *"Zukunftsmusik"* between the two arts that he felt had made the greatest progress in the Renaissance, Cosima's diary entry for Friday, 2 August 1878 notes her husband's mature response to the work that captured his attention decades earlier:

> In the evening R. goes through Palestrina's *Stabat mater*, which has just been published, in order to show it to me; it makes a fine impression, but R. feels that if one were to compare it with painting of the period — a Titian, for instance — one would have to call it a beginning.[61]

Perhaps by that time all of his fondness for later composers had soured Wagner a bit on less-progressive earlier styles. That he had considered Palestrina especially as a prominent composer cannot be questioned, for in his "Entwurf zur Organisation" of 1848 he had referenced the often-repeated fable of Palestrina as the savior of church music and advocated that his music now be used to restore the proper decorum to Catholic services in Dresden in performances given unaccompanied solely by the male choristers.[62] He suggested others follow his lead and rediscover works by Palestrina and his successors, as

[60] Garratt, 226-27.
[61] CTb, 128.
[62] GS 2, 254.

well as compose new works in an acceptable chapel style.[63] Again echoing Hoffmann's sentiments, these measures were specifically aimed at keeping performances of sacred music free of virtuosity of later eras, especially the virtuosity one should associate more readily with opera than with religious services, due in part to vocal style but also to the inclusion of instruments in Wagner's view. He even notes that many religious pieces of music of later eras

> sind absolute musikalische Kunstwerke, die zwar auf der religiösen Basis aufgebaut sind, viel eher aber zur Aufführung in geistlichen Konzerten, als während des Gottesdienstes in der Kirche selbst sich eigenen, namentlich auch ihrer großen Zeitdauer wegen, welche den Werken eines Cherubini, Beethoven, u. s. w. die Aufführung während des Gottesdienstes gänzlich verwehrt.[64]
>
> [are absolute musical artworks, which indeed are built on religious bases, but much more appropriate for performance in spiritual concerts than during Mass itself in churches, especially considering the great length of works by Cherubini, Beethoven, etc. which entirely prohibit their performance during Mass.]

Clearly, Wagner the polymath revolutionary and reformer was already caught in a conundrum concerning how to approach the various works and composers he enjoyed, similar to the ambivalence and the reevaluations he had to impose on his reception of the Greeks' ideas as well. Works were admirable in certain respects but lacking in others. Palestrina's music was especially suitable for services and concert performance with some revisions. But as a Protestant by upbringing, Wagner's attitudes towards the Catholic Church often caused special problems for his own appreciation of religious music. Of course, he himself had no small part in raising religious tensions in Germany during his lifetime, with his views on Judaism especially weighing in heavily due to the publication of his article "Das Judenthum in der Musik" ["Judaism in Music"]

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[63] GS 2, 257.
[64] GS 2, 255.

(completed before 22 August 1850; revised 1869). However, had his views on Catholicism, the religion in which his second wife had been brought up by her father Liszt, been more widely known, Wagner certainly would never have been seen as an advocate of that faith as he had been in 1848. Nor could his views on Catholicism be cast in a favorable light even in relationship with his views on Jewishness. Yet when his anti-Semitic essay was revised and reprinted in 1869, Cosima noted in her diary with some sense of irony: "A Catholic paper praises the Jewish pamphlet and praises the young King [Ludwig II] who, like his ancestor [Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria] who protected Orlando di Lasso, loves and honors R. Wagner, the composer of heroic song. Such is the world."[65] To further complicate matters for Wagner, Ludwig II was also Catholic.

Although Wagner undertook several reevaluations of Palestrina and Renaissance music in general, he did show a genuine interest in this repertoire. Wagner braved a thunderstorm to hear that composer's *Responsorium* in 1879[66] and continued to look over his music even at the end of his life: "R. read Palest[rina]'s Mass for Pope Marcellus, finds it lacking in invention, and says that anyway he hates this version of the Mass, this Credo in which all the stanzas (and what stanzas!) are composed with the fear of Hell always firmly in mind!"[67] Again, in the Credo Palestrina adopts a somewhat declamatory and homorhythmic style, no doubt in order to get through the lengthy text of this portion of the Mass. He suggests polyphonic imitation by reducing the full choir (SATTBB) into

[65] CTa, 82; entry for Sunday, 4 April 1869. That Wagner was well aware of Lassus as a predecessor of sorts in Munich cannot be doubted as he had visited the Gasthof Orlando di Lasso, built on the location of the Renaissance composer's former residence in that city. (See *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 852n.)

[66] CTb, 338; entry for Thursday, 10 July 1879.

[67] CTb, 938; entry for Wednesday, 25 October 1882.

smaller sub-choirs, much as he had done in the *Stabat mater*. Moreover, Wagner's Schopenhauerian reference to Palestrina's style in his *Beethoven* monograph maintains a judicious balance between an appreciative reverence for his style and its supposed religious revelations and a critique of what Wagner found lacking in it:

> Wollen wir das von ihm wahrgenommene innerste (Traum-)Bild der Welt in seinem getreuesten Abbilde uns vorgeführt denken, so vermögen wir dieß in ahnungsvollster Weise, wenn wir eines jener berühmten Kirchenstücke *Palestrina's* anhören. Hier ist der Rhythmus nur erst noch durch den Wechsel der harmonischen Accordfolgen wahrnehmbar, während er ohne diese, als symmetrische Zeitfolge für sich, gar nicht existirt; hier ist demnach die Zeitfolge noch so unmittelbar an das, an sich zeit- und raumlose Wesen der Harmonie gebunden, daß die Hilfe der Gesetze der Zeit für das Verständniß einer solchen Musik noch gar nicht zu verwenden ist. Die einzige Zeitfolge in einem solchen Tonstücke äußert sich fast nur in den zartesten Veränderungen einer Grundfarbe, welche die mannigfaltigen Übergänge im Festhalten ihrer weitesten Verwandtschaft uns vorführt, ohne daß wir eine Zeichnung von Linien in diesem Wechsel wahrnehmen können. Da nun diese Farbe selbst aber nicht im Raume erscheint, so erhalten wir hier ein fast ebenso zeit- als raumloses Bild, eine durchaus geistige Offenbarung, von welcher wir uns zugleich deutlicher als alles Andere das innerste Wesen der Religion, frei von jeder dogmatischen Begriffsfiktion, zum Bewußtsein bringt.[68]
>
> [Should we wish to consider that perceptible and innermost (dream-)image of the world in its most faithful representation presented before us, we are able to do so in a manner full of apprehension when we hear one of *Palestrina's* famous pieces of church music. Here rhythm is only perceptible at first through the change of harmonic sequence of chords, for without these it would not exist at all as a symmetrical succession in itself; thus, here succession is still so tightly bound up with the time- and spacelessness of harmony that the help afforded by the laws of time are entirely not applicable to understanding such music. The only ordering in such musical pieces is almost exclusively manifested in the subtle variations of the basic coloring, which present us with manifold transitions of the widest affinity, without us being able to perceive a drawing of lines in this exchange. Yet because this coloring itself cannot appear in space, thus we receive now an image that is just as devoid of time as it is of space, a thoroughly spiritual revelation, from which we receive an immediate and clearer consciousness than from any other of the innermost nature of religion, free from every dogmatic conceptual fiction.]

[68] GS 9, 79-80.

This remarkable passage looks back reflectively to Wagner's description in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* of harmony as the Greeks understood it and forward to the libretto to *Parsifal*, which was still not yet begun in verse at the time *Beethoven* was written.[69] In Wagner's final opera, Gurnemanz explains to a bewildered Parsifal that in the realm of grail there is a peculiar synchronous effect at play: "Du siehst, mein Sohn, zum Raum wird hier die Zeit." ["You see, my son, time becomes space here."] With this pronouncement by Gurnemanz in Act One of *Parsifal* an orchestral transition intended to cover the change of scene from the forest around Montsalvat to the interior of the castle begins. Then Gurnemanz and Parsifal enter the castle of the Grail, and here in his choral writing Wagner demonstrates the stylistic features he has derived from Palestrina's Renaissance style as well as that of Bachian chorales (Example 9).

With hints at independent vocal lines coming together for textual emphasis, Wagner eschews the rhythmically neutral style for the initial section, "Den sündigen Welten, mit tausend Schmerzen," which is based on material first heard in the Prelude to the opera that has last been repeated by the orchestra in the aforementioned scene change. Far from being homorhythmic, Wagner treats the lines as essentially heterophonic — albeit transposed, both to create harmony and to allow for harmonic changes — versions of the same basic melodic material; they share common contours and motivic material. Although he avoids true *Stimmtausch* and only suggests imitation, there is an effect of a

[69] Oddly, Cosima's diary entry for Tuesday, 2 August 1870 reads: "R. reads me his continuation of the Beethoven essay: 'To please you I have mentioned Palestrina'" (CTa, 251). It seems more than likely that this statement was meant in jest, as Wagner was not above teasing his wife for the faith, and its trappings, in which she was brought up. Moreover, the Palestrina references in *Beethoven* are germane to the discussion at hand therein.

great concentration of limited material in this section, which is very much at odds with Wagner's usual procedure of combining and juxtaposing motivic material in his mature works. (Related motivic material is bracketed in the score.)

Of course, the highly chromatic language of this section is not even remotely antiquarian in nature, but considering it is diffused by the placement of the choir above the stage according to Wagner's stage directions these passages do achieve a quasi-religious, almost oracular character in performance. A final feature of this section is the ambiguity of its rhythmic direction. The uppermost part is clearly generally guided by the rhythm implied by the text with various licenses being taken in all parts to create the sense of independent lines. All this choral material is juxtaposed with statements of the bell motive first heard in the orchestral transition, now with a similarly ambiguous rhythmic syncopation in the upper parts. In summary, it would seem more than likely that the description Wagner provided for Palestrina's style in *Beethoven* was what guided his choices here in *Parsifal* as well: "The only ordering in such musical pieces are almost exclusively manifested in the subtle variations of the basic coloring, which present us with manifold transitions of the widest affinity, without us being able to perceive a drawing of lines in this exchange."

The concluding passage in this choral section, beginning with "Der Glaube lebt, die Taube schwebt," is an entirely different matter. Here Wagner was clearly guided by the chorale with its neutral rhythmic nature as he had described in *"Zukunftsmusik."* Here there is almost constant motion by quarter note, with only a few passing eighth notes added in sparingly. Again, the material used relates directly to that of the previous

section, but it is now presented diatonically (bracketed in the score). The counterpoint is very highly focused and controlled in an almost Classical fashion between the outer voices, with first the top part moving, then an echoing by the lowest voice. This simple imitation is reversed, as is the melodic contour through simple inversion (minus the original anacrusis), for the concluding passage, "der für euch fliesst, des Weines geniesst." So carefully considered is the voice-leading, diatonicism, and counterpoint that one is tempted to cite this material, which also derives from the Prelude to the opera, as an example of quasi-post-Tridentine Catholic polyphony as readily as Bachian chorale style. Either way, the archaic nature of the writing here throughout this choral passage clearly demonstrates how Wagner has adapted features of previous epochs in the service of his drama. Again, that the styles he has evidently chosen post-date the action of a work set in the Middle Ages would have been of less importance to him than the overall effects these styles produce and their effect on the listeners.

In the period between his earlier halfhearted condemnations of and later appreciation for the development of polyphony, Wagner did undoubtedly gain newer and better sources, both in the form of historiographic writings and more examples of actual works, for his appreciation of Renaissance music. Yet the fundamental elements he drew upon from the works of Palestrina especially — the somewhat amorphous rhythms, harmonic shadings based on a slower harmonic rhythm, and an animated yet somewhat reserved approach to polyphony — seem to have been features of the style with which he was conversant for most of his mature compositional life, not something he discovered after he began to enjoy the successes of his career. Certainly, he would have benefited

from more detailed discussions of modal and polyphonic theory through his growing second library collection, but Wagner's earliest observations clearly went a long way to foster his further interest in studying early music, which served him well in recreating his own version of an archaic style.

CHAPTER 4

BAROQUE AND THE RISE OF OPERA

> R. observes that it is true that Italian opera is based on folk song, but it has been so terribly spoiled.
>
> — Cosima Wagner's diary (Friday, 23 January 1880)[1]

Using the rise of opera as a demarcation for the beginning of the Baroque era, Wagner's views on the significance of this trend, which was inspired by folk music in his view, changed radically over the course of his writings. He saw the rejection of polyphony, the major advance music made during the Renaissance in the realm of harmony, as a consequence of the early operatic style and as an important juncture in the development of music. As an heir to his immediate predecessors, including specifically Weber for his chosen genre, Wagner faced something of a conundrum: As a Romantic, Wagner realized the need to rely on the folk aspect in creating his works, especially folk song as an inspiration for melodies. Yet, as he also saw himself as an heir to the style of Bach with his density of texture and careful control of harmonies, Wagner felt some debt to the contrapuntal arts and the way they allowed for the creation of increasingly advanced harmonic language from the time of Palestrina through that of Bach. Now with the development of opera highlighting melody at the expense of harmony, Wagner somehow had to reconcile these two important influences on his own style.[2]

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[1] CTb, 432.

[2] See the concluding Chapter 6 for more on Wagner's discovery of early operatic endeavors.

It is clear that Wagner's training with the Thomaskantor Christian Theodor Weinlig (1780-1842) was heavily focused on counterpoint, but there also was a genuine wariness in his teacher about the merits of Bach's style of composition. The brief period of tuition in 1831 lasted only about six months, and Wagner obviously downplayed its significance in order to foster the notion that he had received little formal training, part of his romantic mystique as a composer. On 3 March 1832, Wagner wrote to his sister Ottilie

> … for more than six months I have been a pupil of the local cantor Theodor *Weinlig*, who, with some justification, may be regarded as the *greatest living contrapuntalist* and who, at the same time, is so excellent a fellow that I am as fond of him as if he were my own father.[3]

Curiously, Weinlig evidently avoided using Bach as examples in his teachings. Wagner mentioned this was probably due to the fact that Bach, like Wagner himself, "when he needs to, … throws the rule book out of the window, … and that is why R.'s teacher Weinlig never really liked him."[4]

The account Wagner gave of his studies with Weinlig in a letter from March 1834 to the resident opera producer in Leipzig, Franz Hauser (1794-1870), is even more detailed:

> This man [Weinlig], to whom I owe more than I shall ever be able adequately to repay by my own achievements alone, realized where my most immediate deficiencies lay; — he advised me first of all not to continue studying any actual counterpoint, but to gain a thorough grounding in harmony; he began by taking me through the strict *gebundener Styl* of harmony, persevering until he felt I had a completely firm grasp of it, for , in his view, this learned style was the one and only basis for a correct handling of free and rich harmonies, as well as being essential for learning any

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[3] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 13.

[4] CTb, 270; entry for Thursday, 20 February 1879. Examples of Bach breaking the rules are even given by Wagner on another occasion: he maintained that the prelude in BWV 864 contains parallel fifths, and the fugue in BWV 865 seems to be a reduction of a four-voice work to three. "[T]hat brought Bach into disrepute and caused his teacher Weinlig to refuse to have anything to do with him" (CTb, 235; entry for Friday, 20 December 1878). (See also Chapter 5 below.)

> counterpoint. We then set about studying counterpoint along the strictest lines and in accordance with the most basic principles, and then, believing he had laid the most solid foundations by perfecting my knowledge of this final & most difficult part of my general musical education and that, having learned this, I was ready to venture into the most difficult areas of composition, he discharged me with the following words: "I hereby release you from your apprenticeship, as any master should release his apprentice when the latter has learned all that the former can teach him."[5]

Wagner had written to Hauser in response to the latter's decision to decline the composer's opera *Die Feen* [*The Fairies*] (1833-34) for production in Leipzig. Wagner felt the need to justify his musical training to Hauser and to point out that Weinlig had indeed suggested his former student seek out performances of his works. Wagner believed he had sufficiently absorbed eighteenth-century style and moved beyond it to the *lingua franca* of the German operatic style of his day, as found in works by Weber and Marschner. Wagner's early background with Weinlig may have been in counterpoint, but that study was based on a thorough understanding of the harmonic basis for this style. Afterwards, the composer could move on to the operatic style in vogue assured that his basic training would serve him well.

Wagner's earliest summaries dealing with opera developing with a focus on melody at the expense of harmony are indeed critical, yet still more objective than they would later become. He also reveals less of an interest in all the details of history than in critiquing the operatic style as it was commonly conceived in practice. For example, in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, he explains that

> Der lebendige Athem der ewig schönen, gefühlsadeligen Menschenstimme, wie sie aus der Brust des Volkes unerstorben, immer jung und frisch herausdrang, blies auch dieses kontrapunktischen Kartenhaus über den Haufen. Die in unentstellter Anmuth sich treu gebliebene *Volksweise*, das mit der Dichtung innig verwebte, einige und sicher begränzte *Lied*, hob sich auf seinen elastischen Schwingen, freudige Erlösung kündend, in die Regionen der

[5] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 18-19.

schönheitsbedürftigen, wissenschaftlich musikalischen Kunstwelt hinein. Diese verlangte es wieder *Menschen* — nicht Pfeifen — singen zu lassen; der Volksweise bemächtigten sie sich hierzu, und konstruirte aus ihr die *Opern-Arie*. Wie die Tanzkunst sich des Volkstanzes bemächtigte, um nach Bedürfniß an ihm sich zu erfrischen, und ihn nach ihrem maaßgeblichen Modelbelieben zur Kunstkombination zu verwenden, — so machte es aber auch die vornehme Operntonkunst mit der Volksweise: nicht den *ganzen* Menschen hatte sie erfaßte, um ihn in seinem ganzen Maaße nun künstlerisch nach seiner Naturnothwendigkeit gewähren zu lassen, sondern nur den *singenden*, und seiner Singweise nicht die Volksdichtung mit ihrer inwohnenden Zeugungskraft, sondern eben bloß die vom Gedicht abstrahirte melodische Weise, der sie nach Belieben nun modisch konventionelle, absichtlich nichtssagensollende Wortphrasen unterlegte; nicht das schlagende Herz der Nachtigall, sondern nur ihren Kehlschlag begriff man, und übte sich ihn nachzuahmen. Wie der Kunsttänzer seine Beine abrichtete, in den mannigfachsten und doch einförmigsten Biegungen, Renkungen und Wirbelungen den natürlichen Volkstanz, den er aus sich nicht weiter entwickeln konnte, zu variiren, — so richtet der Kunstsänger eben nur seine Kehle ab, jene von dem Munde des Volkes abgelöste Weise, die er nimmer aus ihrem Wesen neu zu erzeugen fähig war, durch unendliche Verzierungen zu umschreiben, durch Schnörkel aller Arten zu verändern; und so nahm eine mechanische Fertigkeit anderer Art nur wieder den Platz ein, den die kontrapunktischen Geschicklichkeit geräumt hatte.[6]

[The living breath of the eternally beautiful, sensitively noble human voice, which issued forth from the heart of the people, immortal, always youthful and fresh, blew away the contrapuntal house of cards into a heap. The *folk tune*, having remained faithful to its undistorted charm — the *song*, which had become intimately interwoven and united with and thereby surely defined by poetry, raised itself on its elastic pinions, joyfully announcing redemption, in the realms of the beauty-starved, scientifically musical art-world. This (art-world) required *people* — not pipes — to sing again; thus it seized the folk tune for this purpose and constructed out of it the *opera aria*. Just as the art of dance seized folk dance out of a desire to refresh itself, and to employ it as a composite art according to its influential fashionable pleasure, so too did high operatic composition deal with the folk tune: this did not comprehend the *entirety* of man and grant to him the entire artistic measure according to his natural necessity, instead, just the *singing* aspect; and this singing was not folk poetry with its creative bent, but instead, just the bare melodic tune abstracted from the poem, now underlaid with fashionably conventional, intentionally meaningless word-phrases; one grasped not the beating heart of the nightingale, but instead just its warbling, and practiced imitating it. Just as the classical dancer has trained his legs to vary by means of the most diverse and yet most monotonous bendings, wrigglings, and whirlings of natural folk dance, from which he can develop nothing further, — thus in the same way, does the classical singer train his throat in each of the tunes removed from the mouths of the people, never able to fashion anything new from their essence, varying them only through adding on endless ornamentation and frills of all types; and thus, a mechanical skill of a different sort took up the place that contrapuntal skillfulness had vacated.]

Folk music was adopted as a model for opera but, significantly, without its originally related poetry. The mechanical training of the human voice in an effort to add some variety to the borrowed folk tunes results in an artifice that is no better than "the

[6] GS 3, 88-9.

contrapuntal house of cards," an epithet which is clearly not much of an endorsement for the polyphonic art.

As if to underline the importance of what Wagner saw as steps backward in the development of dramatic music, next he outlines the earliest phases of the history of opera twice in *Oper und Drama*, first in the Introduction with a cursory summary and then immediately following that in greater detail with reference to musical style in the section entitled "Die Oper und das Wesen der Musik" ["Opera and the Nature of Music"]. Both discussions need to be read together to understand his primary argument concerning the mistake that had been perpetuated throughout the history of opera: "daß ein Mittel des Ausdruckes (die Musik) zum Zwecke, der Zweck des Ausdruckes (das Drama) aber zum Mittel gemacht war" ["that the means of expression (the music) was made into the purpose, while the purpose of the expression (the drama) was made into the means"].[7]

The overview of the development of opera in the Introduction to *Oper und Drama* is intentionally brief, and it seems likely that Wagner knew little about the earliest phases in the creation of *stile rappresentativo* around the time of his writing in 1850.

> Nicht aus der mittelalterlichen Volksschauspielen, in welchen wir die Spuren eines natürlichen Zusammenwirkens der Tonkunst mit der Dramatik finden, ging die Oper hervor; sondern an den üppigen Höfen Italiens — merkwürdiger Weise des einzigen großen europäischen Kulturlandes, in welchem sich das Drama nie zu irgend welcher Bedeutung entwickelte — fiel es vornehmen Leuten, die an Palestrina's Kirchenmusik keinen Geschmack mehr fanden, ein, sich von Sängern, die bei Festen sie unterhalten sollten, *Arien*, d. h. ihrer Wahrheit und Naivetät entkleidete Volksweisen, vorsingen zu lassen, denen man willkürliche, und aus Noth zu einem Anscheine von dramatischem Zusammenhang verbunden, Verstexte unterlegte. Diese *dramatische Kantate*, deren Inhalt auf Alles, nur nicht auf das Drama, abzielte, ist die Mutter unserer Oper, ja sie ist die Oper selbst.[8]

[7] GS 3, 231.
[8] GS 3, 231-32.

> [Opera did not develop out of medieval folk plays, in which we find the traces of a natural cooperation of musical composition with drama, but instead, in the luxuriant courts of Italy — strange to say, the only highly cultured European country that never developed drama in any meaningful way — it occurred to some distinguished people, who no longer had a taste for Palestrina's church music, to have singers employed to entertain at feasts sing *arias*, i.e. folk tunes stripped of their truth and naïveté, to which verses were arbitrarily underlaid in the need to create the appearance of dramatic coherence. This *dramatic cantata*, all the contents of which aimed at nothing but the drama, is the mother of our opera — indeed, it is opera itself.]

If by "dramatic cantata" Wagner was thinking of *intermedi* with monodic solo passages, his descriptions are apt as far as the locale of and impetus for the performances. Yet, as the continuation of this passage goes on to describe vocal practice it seems far more likely that he had eighteenth-century works in mind rather than those of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, he immediately moves on to discuss the libretti of Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782), making it clear that he has compressed the early history of opera into one that was already in need of reform. As there is no discussion of the roots of opera in ancient drama, which we have seen was one of Wagner's favorite topics as far as the derivation of his own theories of *Gesamtkunstwerk* are concerned, it is safe to assume that his knowledge of the earliest Italian efforts was severely limited at best at this juncture.

Wagner goes on to provide more glimpses into his knowledge concerning early opera in the main text of *Oper und Drama*. Here his critique is initially based more upon the division of the arts than the actual musical style. After repeating how aria was derived from folk music, Wagner comments that

> Die Ausbildung der Volksweise zur Opernarie war zunächst das Werk jenes Kunstsängers, dem es an sich nicht mehr an dem Vortrage der Weise, sondern an der Darlegung seiner Kunstfertigkeit gelegen war: er bestimmte die ihm nothwendigen Ruhepunkte, den Wechsel des bewegteren oder gemäßigteren Gesangsausdruckes, die Stellen, an denen er, frei von allem rhythmischen und

> melodischen Zwange, seine Geschicklichkeit nach vollstem Belieben allein zu Gehör bringen konnte. Der Komponist legte nur dem Sänger, der Dichter wieder dem Komponisten das Material zu dessen Virtuosität zurecht.[9]
>
> [The development of folk tunes into opera arias was mainly the work of the trained singer, for whom it was no longer an opportunity to perform the tune but rather to display his artistic ability: he determined, where necessary, the resting points in the interchange between the more lively and more moderate expressions in the song, the places where, free from all rhythmic and melodic restraints, he could allow his skillfulness alone according entirely to his wont to be heard. The composer merely provided the singer as the poet provided the composer the material to display his virtuosity.]

As chaotic and backwards as this notion regarding performance seems, it would have been more or less possible to varying degrees in many works composed before the eighteenth century. One need only think of the various, often radically different approaches that have been taken in the performance of works by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Yet Wagner's penchant for oversimplification and hyperbole belies the fact that there often was a greater collaboration between the various artists involved in bringing the earliest music dramas to performance than there would be in later eras. For example, both composers, Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) and Giulio Caccini (1551-1618), performed in what was evidently a collaborative effort, *Euridice*, at the wedding festivities of Maria de' Medici and Henri IV of France (r. 1589-1610) on 6 October 1600.[10] At this stage, there is no evidence Wagner had any knowledge of such Florentine endeavors, nor should one suppose did the majority of his readers.

What was of interest to Wagner were the contents and style of performance of the musical items of earlier operas, for his discussion of these serve to prove that as far as he

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[9] GS 3, 235.

[10] See John Walter Hill, "Florence: Musical Spectacle and Drama, 1570-1650," in *The Early Baroque Era: From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*," Music and Society, ed. Curtis Price (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 136-38.

was concerned the music and not the drama drove early opera. Again, although he could not have been intimately familiar with works of the early Baroque era through performance, his descriptions do demonstrate at least some knowledge of their style. He continues in *Oper und Drama* by accounting for dance and the need for at least some poetic creativity in constructing early dramatic works before moving on to a discussion of the basic musical elements:

> Der dramatische Kantate wurde, durch das luxuriöse Verlangen der vornehmen Herren nach Abwechselung in Vergnügen, das *Ballet* hinzugefügt. Der Tanz und die Tanzweise, ganz so willkürlich dem Volkstanze und der Volkstanzweise entnommen und nachgebildet, wie die Opernarie es dem Volksliede war, trat mit der spröden Unvermischungsfähigkeit alles Unnatürlichen zu der Wirksamkeit des Sängers hinzu, und dem Dichter entstand, bei solcher Häufung des innerlich gänzlich Zusammenhangslosen, natürlich die Aufgabe, die Kundgebungen der vor ihm ausgelegten Kunstfertigkeiten zu einem irgendwie gefügten Zusammemhange zu verbinden….
>
> Auch das *Rezitativ* ist keinesweges aus einem wirklichen Drange zum Drama in der Oper, etwa als eine neue Erfindung, hervorgegangen: lange bevor man diese redende Gesangsweise in die Oper einführte, hat sich die christliche Kirche zur gottesdienstlichen Rezitation biblischer Stellen ihrer bedient. Der in diesen Rezitationen nach ritualischer Vorschrift bald stehend gewordene, banale, nur noch scheinbar, nicht aber wirklich mehr sprechende, mehr gleichgültig melodische, als ausdrucksvoll redende Tonfall ging zunächst, mit wiederum nur musikalischer Willkür gemodelt und variirt, in die Oper über, so daß mit Arie, Tanzweise und Rezitativ der ganze Apparat des musikalischen Drama's — und zwar bis auf die neueste Oper dem Wesen nach unverändert — festgestellt war. Die dramatischen Pläne, die diesem Apparate untergelegt wurden, gewannen ebenfalls bald stereotypen Bestand; meistens der gänzlich misverstandenen griechischen Mythologie und Heroenwelt entnommen, bildeten sie ein theatralisches Gerüst, dem alle Fähigkeit, Wärme und Theilnahme zu erwecken, vollständing abging, das dagegen die Eigenschaft besaß, sich zur Benutzung von jedem Komponisten nach Belieben herzugeben, wie denn auch die meisten dieser Texte von den verschiedensten Musikern wiederholt komponirt worden sind. —[11]

> [Due to the extravagant desire of distinguished lords for variety in their pleasures, *ballet* was inserted into the dramatic cantata. Dance and dance tunes, just as arbitrarily taken and copied from folk dance and folk-dance melodies as opera aria had been from folk songs, joined in with the incompatible skill in all things unnatural and having the same effectiveness as the singer; and amidst such an accumulation of entirely and fundamentally incompatible elements, to the poet naturally fell the task somehow to bind together into a coherent whole all these various things laid out before his artistic abilities….
>
> Also, in no way did *recitative* emerge by chance as a new invention from a real move in opera towards drama: long before this *parlando* manner of singing was introduced into opera, the Christian Church made use of it in services for the recitation of biblical passages. This banal intonation created according to ritualistic prescription by this recitation appeared to, yet did not

[11] GS 3, 236-7.

> actually, speak any longer; it was more of an indifferent, melodic intonation rather than an expressive, communicative one, which when first taken over by opera and only slightly modified and varied in an arbitrary musical fashion, thus established the entire apparatus of musical drama — which, indeed, remains unchanged in essence up to the most recent operas — with aria, dance tune, and recitative. In turn, the dramatic plans laid under this apparatus soon won its own stereotypical stock; for the most part, based on a complete misunderstanding of Greek mythology and its heroes, they produced a theatrical platform, completely lacking the ability to arouse the warmth and empathy that they (the Greek myths) possessed. These (myths) were given up to every composer to use according to his wont, and in fact the majority of these texts were set repeatedly by a great variety of musicians.]

It is significant that Wagner includes dance here in the history of opera, for from the earliest courtly entertainments dance had often been an integral part of the festivities. Of course, it is also possible that he was thinking of much later works, such as those of Gluck, whom Wagner mentions in the next sentence, or even Mozart's *Idomeneo* (1781). Both Gluck's work and Mozart's early *opera seria* include ballets or individual dance movements.

Equally interesting is the composer's discussion of recitative here in *Oper und Drama*. His derivation of this style from psalmody is not surprising, given what he had said elsewhere along similar lines, especially in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. He makes no mention of the notion that recitative was a sort of intoned, heightened speech similar to what the Florentine Camerata had sought to recreate from their various theories about ancient drama. Clearly, this suggests that at this stage Wagner had no knowledge that much of what he wanted to do as explained in *Oper und Drama* was not so different, at least in intent, from what the earliest Italian pioneers had attempted. Although their accomplishments were indeed radically different, the point of departure for both Wagner and the Florentines was Greek tragedy.

To be sure, Wagner does resort to recitative-like passages even in his mature works. Just as in the works of his predecessors, these passages are often meant to

advance the plot. However, Wagner's approach is less formulaically recitational than that of most other composers who came before him. It is unusual for Wagner not to adopt a speech-like rhythm and inflection for even his least melodic vocal writing, and it is the text that serves as his guide when musical matters must give way to the drama. Nonetheless, Wagner reverts to the older style as an anachronistic element in *Die Meistersinger* when Fritz Kothner reads the rules ("Die Tabulatur") for the constitution of a Meisterlied in Act One before Walther's trial song, "Fanget an!" Technical descriptions concerning the art of the Meistersingers in Wagner's libretto were modeled after an appendix entitled "Von der Meister-Singer holdseligen Kunst" to *De Sacri rom. imperii libera Civitate noribergensi commentatio* (Altdorf, 1697) by Johann Christoph Wagenseil (1633-1705).[12] Wagner's stage directions make it clear that Kothner is to be seen reading these rules aloud. Perhaps for this reason, the composer felt that adopting a highly formalized recitational style would be both humorous and fittingly anachronistic here (Example 10). Of course, what Wagner creates is nothing like true recitative, for he relies not on meter but on the delivery of the text that is appropriate to its own metrical pattern.

Wagner had first heard of Wagenseil's chronicle as a child through E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Serapionsbrüder* (1819-21).[13] Whether that stuck in his memory or whether he decided to make his acquaintance with Wagenseil's Nuremberg chronicle because

[12] The bulk of the volume is in Latin, but the appendix is in German, enabling Wagner to make direct use of it.

[13] Jörg Linnenbrügger, *Richard Wagners "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg": Studien und Materialien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des ersten Aufzugs (1861-1866)*, Abhandlungen zur Musikgeschichte, hrsg. Martin Staehelin, Bd. 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), vol. 1, 28.

Jacob Grimm cited it in his *Über den altdeutschen Meistergesang* (Göttingen, 1811), to which Wagner returned over and over, the composer sought out the rare work concerning Nuremberg on a visit to Vienna in 1861. There, his friend and fellow composer Peter Cornelius (1824-74) took Wagner on his first visit to the Royal-Imperial Court Library on 18 November.[14] In *Mein Leben*, Wagner gives an account of his encounter with Wagenseil's book that more than hints at his debt to it:

> … we were lucky to find the book, but to get permission to take it out my friend [Cornelius] had to pay what he described to me as a very disagreeable visit to Baron [Eligius Franz Joseph Freiherr von] Münch-Bellinghausen ([who, for his dramas, adopted the penname Friedrich] Halm). Then I sat down eagerly in my hotel and appropriated excerpts from the *Chronicle*, which I soon used in my libretto in a manner that astonished those who knew nothing of the subject. [15]

Fortunately, Wagner was able to secure the release of Wagenseil's work so that he could make use of it. The tome served as far more than simple research material. For example, in the passage read by Kothner just cited the debt is clear when one refers to Wagner's own notes made from Wagenseil in 1861 with the final libretto for *Meistersinger*:

WAGENSEIL	WAGNER
"Ein jedes Meister-Gesangs Bar hat sein	"Ein jedes Meistergesanges Bar
ordentlich Gemäs, in Reimen u. Sylben, durch	stell' ordentlich ein Gemäße dar
des Meisters Hand ordinirt u. bewehrt, diess	aus unterschiedlichen Gesätzen,
sollen alle Singer, Tichter, und Merker auf	die keiner soll verletzen.
den Fingern ausmessen und zu zehlen wissen.	Ein Gesetz besteht aus zweenen Stollen,
— Ein Bar hat mehrentheils unterschiedliche	die gleiche Melodei haben sollen;
Gesätz oder Stuck, als viel deren der	der Stoll' aus etlicher Vers' Gebänd',
Tichter tichten mag. Ein Gesätz besteht	der Vers hat einen Reim am End'.
meistentheils aus zweien Stollen, die gleiche	Darauf so folgt der Abgesang,
Melodei haben. Ein Stoll besteht aus etlichen	der sei auch etlich Verse lang,
Versen, u. pflegt dessen Ende, wann ein	und hab' sein' besondere Melodei,
Meisterlied geschrieben wird, mit einem	als nicht im Stollen zu finden sei.
Kreutzlein bemerkt zu werden. Darauf folgt	Derlei Gemäßes mehre Baren
der Abgesang, so auch etliche Verse begreift,	soll ein jed' Meisterlied bewahren;
Welches aber eine besondere und andere	und wer ein neues Lied gericht',
Melodey hat, als die Stollen Zuletzt kommt	das über vier der Silben nicht
wieder ein Stoll oder Theil eines Gesätzes,	eingreift in and'rer Meister Weis',

[14] Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 29.
[15] ML, 668.

so der vorhergehende Stollen Melodey hat."[16]

["The *Bar* of each Meister song has it orderly measure, in rhymes and syllables, ordered and reinforced by the Meister's hand. These every singer, poet, and marker should be able to measure and know how to count out on his fingers. — A *Bar* mostly has various sections or parts, as many of them as the poet can create. A section usually consists of two stanzas, which have the same melody. A stanza consists of just so many verses and usually carries at its end, if it is written as a Meister song, the mark of a little cross. Thereafter follows the after-song, also consisting of just so many verses, which however have a particular and different melody, unless some stanzas come last again with a stanza or part of a section having a melody from preceding stanzas."]

dess' Lied erwerb' sich Meister-Preis."[17]

["The *Bar* of each Meister song
presents an orderly measure therein
of its various sections,
so that no one may be offended.
A section consists of two stanzas
which should have the same melody;
a stanza is made up of so many verse lines,
which have a rhyme at the end.
Thereafter follows the after-song,
which is also just so many verses long,
and has its own particular melody,
which cannot be found in the stanzas.
In such a measure, more *Bars*
should each Meister song repeat;
and he who puts together a new song
that does not contain more than
four syllables from another Meister tune
wins himself a Meister prize with the song."]

With such a detailed description of *Bar* form in a section that not so coincidentally falls into that form — albeit ironically with three *Stollen*, which Lorenz attempts to justify as the normative two[18] — Wagner must have indeed astonished those in his audience who not only knew little about music history but also that he was so well-informed about such matters. Thus, Wagner had adequate knowledge of *Bar* form to be able to parody it in Kothner's summary of the rules.

Further into *Oper und Drama*, Wagner discusses what he obviously considered to be the epitome of drama after the Greeks, the tragedies of Shakespeare. In contrast to his sweeping comment about the lack of an Italian identity in spoken drama noted above, he displays a genuine interest in Shakespeare's achievements and allows that the playwright

[16] Linnenbrügger includes both a facsimile and transcription of Wagner's notes from Wagenseil; see Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 30 (facsimile) and 34 (transcription). As his study focuses on the gestation and composition of the opera, Linnenbrügger does not undertake the comparison presented here.

[17] GS 7, 181.

[18] Lorenz, vol. 3, 73.

went beyond the Greeks in that one finds the chorus replaced by individual supporting characters in his works. These new additions are part of the action and their own actions are governed by the same necessity as those of the hero himself. It is only under the influence of the state that this individuality is quashed and replaced by "bare, frozen character masks" ["bloßen stabilen Charaktermaske"].[19] Clearly, by now Wagner is thinking of the Italian *commedia dell' arte* tradition, which did interact and share performers with musical theater, especially in *opera buffa*, and which left its mark on French theater. He goes on to note that "Das Schattenspiel solcher innerlich hohlen, aller Individualität baren Charaktermasken ward die dramatische Grundlage der Oper. Je inhaltsloser die Persönlichkeiten unter diesen Masken waren, desto geeigneter erachtete man sie zum Singen der Opernarie." ["The shadow-play of such internally hollow masks barren of all individuality became the dramatic basis of opera. The more devoid of personality those under the masks were, the more appropriate it seems for them to sing operatic arias."][20]

This criticism of stock characters and stock character types is one basis for Wagner's avoidance of the tradition of including passages in his works for a massed chorus, something that he had trouble relinquishing altogether even in his later works. Even so, Wagner often uses choral passages in a highly selective way, to set a scene, as noted above in the First Act of *Parsifal*, or to express some sort of massed emotion of individual characters. While working on the text for *Parsifal*, he commented that with

[19] GS 3, 269.
[20] GS 3, 269.

the Flower Maidens in the Second Act, "No one in the audience will take any notice of the text, … but the singers sing differently and feel like individuals if they do not just have to sing senseless repetitions in chorus, and this adds to the general effect, as, for instance, with the song of the Valkyries."[21]

In the riot that concludes the Second Act of *Die Meistersinger*, individuals become allied and share vocal lines, yet the impression of a large number of declamatory vocal ideas interwoven with selected motivic material dispels any notion of this being any sort of stereotypical operatic chorus. In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner allowed that this is the only justifiable way a choral episode can be included in a drama and that writing a chorus presents its own challenges:

> In der Blüthe des lyrischen Ergusses, bei vollkommen bedingten Antheile aller handelnden Personen und ihrer Umgebung an einem gemeinschaftlichen Gefühlsausdrucke, bietet sich einzig dem Tondichter die polyphonische Vokalmasse dar, der er die Wahrnehmbarmachung der Harmonie übertragen kann: auch hier jedoch wird es die nothwendige Aufgabe des Tondichters bleiben, den Antheil der dramatischen Individualitäten an dem Gefühlsergusse nicht als bloße harmonische Unterstützung der Melodie kundzugeben, sondern — gerade auch im harmonischen Zusammenklange — die Individualität des Betheiligten in bestimmter, wiederum melodischer Kundgebung sich kenntlich machen zu lassen …[22]
>
> [In the flowering of a lyric flood derived from a perfectly conditioned participation of all active personages and their company in a communal expression of emotion, only the polyphonic vocal mass presents itself to the tone-poet as capable of assuming the task of making the harmony palpable: yet even here the necessary task of the tone-poet remains the participation of the dramatic individuals in the flood of emotions not to convey the mere harmonic support of the melody, but rather — already also in such harmonic concord — to allow the individuality of those involved to be made distinctly discernable amongst such a melodic presentation …]

Wagner has already introduced his town full of individuals, and that is the group of characters now seen in turmoil on St. John's Eve. They are not there for local color; they are the action of the scene (Example 11). As Lorenz has pointed out, this section at the

[21] CTb, 49-50; entry for Tuesday, 26 March 1878.
[22] GS 4, 164.

end of Act Two of *Die Meistersinger* is often incorrectly referred to as a fugue because it begins with a fugato passage with a new motive as a subject. A better model antecedent would be the chorale-fantasy, for as Lorenz goes on to note the musical underpinning of this passage is Beckmesser's serenade melody (heard in the basses as a *cantus firmus*) around which other motives and fragments of motives are used in a contrapuntal fashion, not unlike a cantata or motet movement by Bach.[23] It is somewhat ironic that Wagner would chose such a carefully controlled style for his riot, of course, but the effect is indeed of a mass of individuals engaged in strife, not a well-behaved chorus acting in concert to present the scene in an orderly fashion.

Wagner's use of a fugato as a *stretta*, having already gradually added more and more characters into the fracas, with an increase in tempo recalls the tradition of sectional *buffa* finales from over a century before he composed *Die Meistersinger*, his own solitary comic opera. One of the drawbacks to Lorenz's building-block approach in which smaller discrete forms are used to build up scenes and entire acts is that he often failed to notice the relationships between the sections. He shows how the entire scene between Sachs and Beckmesser is built up of nested *Bar* forms yet makes no mention of the increases in tempo — Beckmesser first uses fermatas in his song, then drops them, and the final *stretta* is marked "Etwas schneller" ["somewhat faster"] (see also the discussion of Example 15 below) — and the gradual addition of characters until there are more than

[23] Lorenz, vol. 3, 108.

enough to engage in the brawl and create a fugato.[24] Both such increases in tempo and the addition of characters are hallmarks of many finales in comic operas.

Here, Wagner cleverly has a character who is an outsider to the scene, the Night Watchman, serve as the one who is overwhelmed by the musico-dramatic crescendo created by this finale, rather than a principal character who is directly involved in the action. Clearly, this was the composer's intention when the rioters disperse at the sound of the Night Watchman's horn, and he then enters, according to the stage directions, "… rubs his eyes, looks around astonished, shakes his head, and intones his call with a slightly trembling voice" ("… reibt sich die Augen, sieht sich verwundert um, schüttelt den Kopf, und stimmt mit leise bebender Stimme den Ruf an") (Example 12). There can be no doubt Wagner knew the *buffa* conventions quite well given his reliance on them here in *Die Meistersinger*.

The Night Watchman's song itself represents another Baroque *topos* in music. Clearly, the roots of this tradition must stem from the Middle Ages, and Jiří Senhal has traced this practice and its recitational formulas back to Czech sources.[25] Be that as it may, without knowing the significance of the tradition of including such references to the night watchman's song, Wagner again lifted the formula for the text and the quasi-recitational style for the vocal line from Wagenseil's *Chronicle*. Roughly contemporary

[24] Lorenz, vol. 3, 109. Curiously, Lorenz was on the right track when he cites his own research on Alessandro Scarlatti in noting that Wagner's reliance on *Bar* form in which the *Abgesang* builds on a motive from the preceding strophes is not so different from the simple binary forms the Italian composer had used in his comic operas. [See his study *Alessandro Scarlatti's Jugendoper: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Italienischen Oper* (Augsburg: Filser, 1927), vol. 1, 225.]

[25] See Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, *Instrumentalwerke Handschriftlicher Überlieferung*, ed. Jiří Senhal, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, ed. Othmar Wesseley, vol. 127 (Graz/Wien: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1976), viii.

with Wagenseil's work is the Serenade à 5 for strings (often referred to as "Der Nachtwächter") by Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704).[26] In the central *ciacona*, Biber has the strings play pizzicato to accompany a vocal bass part (Example 13). Although Biber's tune differs from Wagner's and the text also varies, the style is very similar and is immediately recognizable as being a recitational rather than truly melodic formula in both cases. Nevertheless, Wagner certainly could not have known Biber's work as it was unpublished until the twentieth century.

There is an even older antecedent representing a melodic style similar to the one that Wagner used for his Night Watchman, Heinrich Schütz's setting of Psalm 127,"Wo der Herr nicht das Haus bauet," SWV 400, in *Symphoniae sacrae III* (published 1650). Again, this source was probably unknown to Wagner, but there is certainly more likelihood that he might have encountered the music of Schütz (1585-1672) than that of Biber. Liszt and Brahms were both very enthusiastic about Schütz's music, for example. Between that and the work of Philipp Spitta and, before him, Carl von Winterfeld in his *Johannes Gabrieli und sein Zeitalter. Zur Geschichte der Blüthe heiligen Gesanges im sechzehnten, und der ersten Entwicklung der Hauptformen unserer heutigen Tonkunst in diesem und dem folgenden Jahrhunderte, zumal in der Venedischen Tonschule* (3 vols.; Berlin, 1834), Schütz, Wagner's predecessor as the Kapellmeister to the Saxon Court in Dresden, had experienced a great Renaissance of interest in his music. The fact that Winterfeld included examples by Schütz and that the original published editions of the

[26] Paul Nettl has dated Biber's work to 1673 as it was sent to a patron on 21 July of that year. (See Biber, viii.)

composer's music dating from his lifetime were still to be found in many libraries made it all the more possible for interested parties to study his music and style.

Schütz's reference to the night watchman's call in his second setting of Psalm 127 uses the same sort of highly rhythmic recitational style Wagner used in *Die Meistersinger* (Example 14). Schütz includes no text and relegates the part to an instrument to heighten the sense of spatial separation between the sopranos and the watchman, who is evidently outside and who could just as easily be blowing on his horn as calling out words similar to those Wagner found in Wagenseil's *Chronicle*. Schütz's compositional choices here very much echo Wagner's sharply differentiated style for his Night Watchman. Clearly, Schütz took the literal meaning of his text and relied on its topical reference to carry the allegorical meaning:[27]

Wo der Herr nicht das Haus bauet,	Unless the Lord builds the house,
so arbeiten umsont, die daran bauen.	those who build it labor in vain.
Wo der Herr nicht die Stadt behütet,	Unless the Lord guards the city,
so wachet der Wächter umsont.	the guard keeps watch in vain.

There are many other examples of imitations of night watchmen, of course.[28] Philipp Nicolai's chorale "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (published 1599 in his *Frewden Spiegel deß ewigen Lebens*), which was itself evidently based on words and/or music by the real Hans Sachs (1494-1576) and was still part of the German Protestant consciousness as evidenced by Mendelssohn's use of it in *Paulus* (1836), also features

[27] Hans Joachim Moser, *Heinrich Schütz: His Life and Work*, 2nd ed., trans. Carl F. Pfatteicher (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 607.

[28] Moser also cites the cantata by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) based on the Song of Songs, "Ich suchte des Nachts," BuxWV 50. Bach may have heard this work in 1705 or 1706 on his visit to Lübeck, influencing him to carry on the tradition into his own works, such as his cantata on the chorale "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme," BWV 140. (See Moser, 607 fn.)

repeated pitches in the opening idea of its melody.[29] There is also the older *alba* tradition, with which Wagner himself was familiar from his study of medieval literature and secular music. Indeed, the reliance on the imagery of someone watching over others during the night was a popular force in the Romantic imagination. Although Wagner had already replicated this *topos* in the Second Act of *Tristan und Isolde* in its medieval guise as a *Tagelied,* he need not have known that his Baroque predecessors were especially fond of imitating the night watchmen as well, since all these traditions clearly share a common source.

A decade after *Oper und Drama*, Wagner was still coming to terms with how to juggle the need to allow for the significance of folk-music influences and the importance of polyphony. Wagner continued to see these as two parallel and mutually exclusive, yet at the same time complementary, trends developing through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to displace monophonic, rhythmically sterile repertoires such as chant. Yet by the time of "*Zukunftsmusik,*" Wagner reappraised the derivation of folk music and moved its sources back not just to the vocal music of the past but precisely to the dance music of the ancients. Now it made sense to criticize modern vocal writing that used dance rhythms, since composers were not only overlooking the fact that modern texts could not possibly be retrofitted to these ancient rhythms but also that these rhythms themselves arose out of bodily motion, not vocal practice. As dance music was assumed

[29] Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, eds., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed. (New York: Grove, 2001), s.v. "Sachs, Hans," and "Meistergesang," by Horst Brunner; and "Nicolai, Philipp," by Walter Blankenburg and Friedhelm Brusniak.

to be popular music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Wagner had reason to heighten its reassimilation beginning in instrumental music of the Baroque, not vocal music.

Wagner's criticism of the Italian practice of prioritizing dance rhythms in melodic writing at the expense of polyphonic texture in the late Renaissance and early Baroque now finds a logical justification in "*Zukunftsmusik*":

> Den Verfall dieser [kontrapunktischen] Kunst in Italien, und die gleichzeitig eintretende Ausbildung der Opernmelodie von Seiten der Italiener, kann ich nicht anders als einen Rückfall in den Paganismus nennen. Als mit dem Verfall der Kirche das weltliche Verlangen auch für die Anwendung der Musik beim Italiener die Oberhand gewann, half man sich am leichtesten dadurch, daß man der Melodie ihre ursprüngliche rhythmische Eigenschaft wiedergab und für den Gesang sie ebenso wie früher für den Tanz verwandte. Die auffallenden Inkongruenzen des modernen, im Einklange mit der christlichen Melodie entwickelten Verses mit dieser ihm aufgelegten Tanzmelodie, übergehe ich hier besonders nachzuweisen und möchte Sie nur darauf aufmerksam machen, daß diese Melodie gegen diesen Vers sich fast ganz indifferent verhielt und ihre variationenhafte Bewegung endlich einzig vom Gesangsvirtuosen sich diktiren ließ. Was uns jedoch am meisten bestimmt, die Ausbildung dieser Melodie als einen Rückfall, nicht aber als einen Fortschritt zu bezeichnen, ist, daß sie ganz unleugbar die ungemein wichtige Erfindung der christlichen Musik, die Harmonie und die sie verkörpernde Polyphonie, für sich nicht zu verwenden wußte.[30]
>
> [The downfall of this (contrapuntal) art in Italy, and the simultaneous development of operatic melody on the part of the Italians, I can call nothing but a relapse into paganism. As, with the downfall of the church, the worldly desire gained the upper hand for the application of music with the Italian too, the easiest way to help this along was to return to melody its original rhythmic quality and to apply it to song just as it had previously had been to dance. I will forgo demonstrating in detail here the striking incongruities created when modern verse that developed in accord with Christian melody was set to such a dance melody and instead bring to your attention that this melody was practically completely indifferent to this verse, and its varied gestures were ultimately dictated by singing virtuosos. However, our main reason for calling the development of this melody a relapse, and certainly not an improvement, is that it utterly and indisputably did not know how to apply the uncommonly important invention made by Christian music of harmony and its embodiment as polyphony.]

Wagner's position is unequivocal now: the loss of polyphony and harmony left only vapid melody imbued with dance rhythms. Rather than being a "house of cards," counterpoint is described here as having been a significant achievement for religious composers, and its downfall at the expense of the rise of opera is now Wagner's main

[30] GS 7, 107.

criticism of these developments. Thus, by 1860 at the latest, Wagner had succeeded in reaffirming the importance of contrapuntal texture. As an aside, he continues his discussion by noting that the regular periodicity common to Italian opera of his own time is due to the harmonic simplicity to which composers reverted.

On the contrary for Germanic lands, with a view to both Baroque stylized dances and their eventual transformation as a symphonic movement in Haydn's hands, Wagner felt secure in stating that

> Eine eigenthümlichen neue Bedeutung gewann dagegen derselben Trieb nach Verweltlichung der christlichen Kirchenmusik in Deutschland. Auch deutsche Meister gingen wieder auf die ursprüngliche rhythmische Melodie zurück, wie sie neben der Kirchenmusik im Volke als nationale Tanzweise ununterbrochen fortgelebt hatte. Statt aber die reiche Harmonie der christlichen Kirchenmusik fahren zu lassen, suchten diese Meister vielmehr in Vereine mit der lebhaft bewegten rhythmischen Melodie auch die Harmonie zugleich neu auszubilden, und zwar in der Weise, daß Rhythmus und Harmonie gleichmäßig im Ausdruck der Melodie zusammentrafen. Hierbei ward die selbständig sich bewegende Polyphonie nicht nur beibehalten, sondern bis zu der Höhe ausgebildet, wo jene der Stimmen, vermöge der kontrapunktischen Kunst, selbständig am Vortrage der rhythmischen Melodie theilnahm, so daß die Melodie nicht mehr nur im ursprünglichen *Canto fermo*, sondern in jeder der begleitenden Stimmen ebenfalls sich vortrug. Wie hierdurch selbst im kirchlichen Gesang da, wo der Lyrische Schwung zur rhythmischen Melodie drängte, eine ganz unerhört mannigfaltigen und durchaus nur der Musik eigene Wirkung von hinreißendster Gewalt erzielt werden konnte, erfährt Derjenige leicht, dem es vergönnt ist, eine schöne Aufführung Bach'scher Vokalkompositionen zu hören, und ich verweise hier unter Anderem namentlich auf eine achtstimmige Motette von Sebastian Bach: "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!", in welcher der Lyrische Schwung der rhythmischen Melodie wie durch ein Meer von harmonischen Wogen braust.[31]
>
> [A peculiar, new meaning was gained in contrast with the same drive to secularize Christian music in Germany. German masters too went back to the original rhythmic melody just as it had lived on without interruption along with church music among the folk as national dance tunes. But instead of letting go of the rich harmony of Christian church music, these masters sought rather to present anew a union of the lively motion of rhythmic melody together with harmony and, indeed, in such a way that rhythm and harmony would cooperate with each other in expressing melody. In this way, the independent motion of polyphony was not only retained but developed to the highest degree possible in contrapuntal art, in which each of the voices independently took part in the presentation of the rhythmic melody, so that the melody was no longer presented only in the original *cantus firmus* but also in each of the accompanying voices as well. How in this very way an entirely unheard of manifold and thoroughly musically exclusive effect of the most enchanting power can be attained when the lyric spirit aspired to rhythmic melody can easily be experienced by one who hears a beautiful performance of one of Bach's

[31] GS 7, 107-8.

> vocal compositions, and I refer you here among other works in particular to an eight-voice motet by Sebastian Bach, "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!", in which the lyric spirit of the rhythmic melody rushes as if through a sea of harmonic waves.]

For Wagner, Bach's redemption of the polyphonic art was accomplished only through a holistic approach to composition in which melody, rhythm, and harmony are mutually dependent on each other and work together to present a unified *Affekt,* a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in a new sense of the term. As noted above, Wagner had conducted Bach's motet in Dresden, and it is not surprising that this work continued to excite his imagination as it does contain so much contrapuntal activity amongst its great variety of textures.

In the finale to Act Two of *Tannhäuser*, Wagner creates a lengthy passage using means similar to what he describes in *Oper und Drama*. His application of *cantus firmus* technique is not as rigorous as the paragon by Bach he cites, but it is obvious that Wagner was attempting to recreate the aura of a concentrated emphasis on one predominant melodic idea that spreads to the other parts as well in this passage. Wagner's characters exhort Tannhäuser by explaining that only by joining the pilgrims in their journey to Rome can he hope to redeem himself from having whiled away his time with Venus. From such a transgression only absolution from the pope himself can release the sinner. This is conveyed to him in no uncertain terms first by his fellow Minnesingers and other knights and then by Elisabeth as well:

LANDGRAF HERMANN,	[LANDGRAVE HERMANN,
DIE SÄNGER, DIE RITTER	THE MINNESINGERS, THE KNIGHTS
Mit ihnen sollst du wallen	You shall travel with them (the pilgrims)
zur Stadt der Gnadenhuld,	To the city of gracious mercy,
im Staub dort niederfallen	Prostrate yourself in the dust there,
und büßen deine Schuld!	And atone for your sin!
Vor ihm stürz' dich darnieder,	Bow down before him
der Gottes Urteil spricht;	Who pronounces God's judgment;

doch kehre nimmer wieder,	But never return here
ward dir sein Segen nicht![32]	Should he withhold his blessing!]

For this somber message Wagner has a chorale-like melody sung in unison by three of the Minnesingers accompanied by the others onstage and agitatedly insistent writing in the strings (Example 15). Faithful to his model, Wagner exploits the contour of the chorale-like melody in various ways throughout the texture. For example, the bass line closely echoes the melody, first *recte* and then in inversion, and fragments of the melody appear in the upper unison string parts. When Elisabeth repeats the melody as a prayer for Tannhäuser's forgiveness, her line is doubled by the upper winds, while a new rhythmic figure inspired initially by various figures from the chorale (but curiously employing a rhythm from the Venusberg music) and then subsequently disintegrating into arpeggios is passed around through the strings and other characters' parts. Only Tannhäuser is out of synch with this fabric, singing neither the pilgrimage chorale nor the new rhythmic figure. With increases in tempo and rhythmic activity, Wagner clearly displays his title character's plight as an outsider with his musical setting of this tableau. As if to underscore the message of this passage and the importance of the chorale melody in conveying it, Wagner has the brass play this theme in unison as the curtain falls on Act Two with Tannhäuser rushing off to Rome.

The Second Act finale of *Die Meistersinger* builds on the *cantus firmus* tradition too, as noted above. Whether Wagner was thinking specifically of Bach's motet as his model or any number of other chorale-based movements, he accompanies a presentation

[32] GS 2, 28-29.

of a melody introduced in the course of the act, Beckmesser's archaic-sounding serenade, with an accompanying fugato that serves as the culminating *stretta*. Here, Wagner manages to have the quasi-Baroque nature of the fugato, which uses a subject with so many repeated pitches it surely would have been eschewed by Bach, sound even more contemporary than Beckmesser's impossibly antiquated *Weise* with its superfluity of notes and runs.

The coloratura Wagner includes to affect an authentic sixteenth-century voice for the Meistersinger is in fact appropriate to the style, as the composer learned from the examples and descriptions given by Wagenseil. All of the Mastersingers engage in florid singing to various degrees as well. Significantly, one of the rules Wagner copied from Wagenseil in his hotel room in Vienna warned against "falsche Blumen oder Coloratur" ["incorrect floridness or coloratura"].[33] From the context, it seems clear that what is at stake is not the use of coloratura per se but the use of the wrong kind for a given melody and/or word. In other words, florid singing with melismas is expected in a *Meisterlied* in the correct setting.

Beckmesser's serenade in Act Two is laden with what must be considered excessive coloratura even given the expectations of the style Wagner is attempting to recreate (Example 16). Indeed, Beckmesser has the most florid vocal line of any of the Mastersingers. The issues surrounding this character and his portrayal in *Die Meistersinger*, both dramatically and musically, are complex, to say the least. Recent

[33] Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 32 (facsimile) and 37 (transcription). In his handwritten copy Wagner placed an "X" next to some of the rules, including this one (number thirty).

scholarship has tended to view Wagner's characterization as being rife with anti-Semitic stereotypes, not the least of which are traced to Beckmesser's florid vocalizations.[34] Although there can be little doubt that some of the encoded traits Beckmesser exhibits echo the composer's own descriptions of Jewish people, especially musicians, the idea that anti-Semitism was the sole guiding force in Wagner's choice of stylistic traits for this character clearly misses the musico-dramatic point entirely. Beckmesser is meant to be seen as an archconservative as far as the Meistersinger art is concerned, but he certainly is not the only one whose vocal style is given to what for Wagner was highly atypical melismatic writing. One will recall that Kothner has been seen to engage in ornamentation of cadences in his reading of the *Tabulatur* (cf. Example 10).

Even the most progressive-minded of Wagner's Meistersingers, Sachs himself engages in ornamented passages when in Act Three he cites the recitational formula of Kothner's reading of the *Tabulatur* combined with a reprise of the chorale that opened the opera as a cadential figure with which he now sings along (Example 17). This return has already been prepared by David's *Sprüchlein* earlier in the act (Example 18). David's melody is based on an inversion of the chorale and includes a plethora of self-conscious double-note groupings on single syllables, another technique Wagner employs rarely and which is clearly meant to sound archaic here. As if inspired to break all of his own rules at once by including an ensemble — a tradition he himself vilified for being

[34] See Paul Lawrence Rose, "The Noble Anti-Semitism of Wagner," *Historical Journal* 15 (1982): 751-63; Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Rose, *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992); and Barry Millington, "Nuremberg Trial: Is There Anti-Semitism in *Die Meistersinger*?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3/3 (1991): 247-60. Millington summarizes most of the relevant details in *The Wagner Compendium*, 304.

non-dramatic — Wagner allows all of his principal characters to engage in florid singing in the Act Three quintet (Example 19). Clearly not coincidentally, the first wholesale adoption by the singers of the orchestra's accompanimental figure in this passage is on the word "Weise" ("tune"), when they reflect on Walther's newly composed *Preislied*. If such words and the thoughts they convey did not merit florid writing according to the Meistersingers' rules, then surely Wagner would not have adopted that archaic style here.

Marc A. Weiner's reading of the transformation of Kothner's recitation of the *Tabulatur* to Sachs' pronouncement of Walther's new *Weise* focuses on the empty melismatic style of the former moving towards the popular, *Volk*-influenced nature of the latter with the citation of the chorale. Sachs is supposed to have legitimized the sterility (and foreignness to German art) of the Masters' rules by the emergence of a new style, which is in turn manifested in Walther's *Preislied*.[35] Yet Sachs' own style as we have seen is not much less archaic than that of at least Kothner if not Beckmesser himself, while Stolzing's style is entirely foreign to the Meistersingers. Thus, Wagner portrays a continuum from the conservatism of Beckmesser to a slightly more progressive bent in some of the Mastersingers to the absolutely impetuous, improvisatory, and uncultivated avant-garde style of Stolzing in Act One.

Beckmesser summarizes his opinions of Walther's actual trial song ("Fanget an!") in Act One with the comments "Kein Absatz wo, kein Koloratur, von Melodei auch nicht eine Spur!" ("no pause anywhere, no coloratura, and not a trace of melody!"), as if to

[35] Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995 and 1997), 125ff.

emphasize that the form is not clear due to the lack of pauses and that what the young knight would pass off as melody is unacceptable and lacks coloratura. Indeed, there are no melismas here, but Wagner's setting is far from unclear due to lack of pauses. For the most part, he employs regular groupings of four measures demarcated by rests. Part of the humor in this scene derives from the fact that Stolzing sings two perfectly un-Wagnerian arias as proof he has grasped at least the gist of the Mastersingers' ways. The first ("Am stillen Herd") goes unnoticed as anything resembling lyric style by most of the audience on stage, although it cannot fail to be perceived as such by any informed member of the audience, set off as it is from what comes before it by a slow and contemplative introduction. The brief discussion by the Mastersingers reveal that there is no consensus that what Walther is singing can be taken as any sort of acceptable form of *Meisterlied*. The second song ("Fanget an!") is criticized on both formal and stylistic grounds by the Masters, culminating in Beckmesser's previously quoted summation of the issues. Because Wagner includes two ideas in what ought to be a fairly straightforward *Bar* form according to the Masters' rules, Beckmesser hears the second section of the first *Stollen* in the latter as a completely new section unto itself. Thus, instead of *a a b*, Beckmesser hears *a b a*, interrupting Stolzing before he has finished the second *Stollen* in his overall design ($a^{1\,2}$ - a^{1}- interruption - $[a]^{2}$ - *b*). When Walther does begin the second *Stollen* Beckmesser believes he is hearing the outlines not of *Bar* form but ternary instead. As a final humorous touch with clearly autobiographical resonance for the composer, by the time the *Abgesang* (*b*) comes along, no one is even listening to Walther anymore.

More or less the same fate seems to have befallen Wagner, as various critics have abandoned the obvious comedic elements of *Die Meistersinger* in the search for deeper (and more sinister) encoded racial messages. Clearly, Stolzing and Beckmesser no more agreed on what the true nature of melody or even music itself is than did Wagner himself and the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904), to some extent another model for Beckmesser — at one point the character was to be called "Hans Lick" — and a decidedly non-Jewish one at that. Whether Hanslick took the general plot as a personal attack against himself or as the composer lashing out at Philistines in general cannot be determined with any certainty, but Wagner did record what transpired on his visit to friends in Vienna on 23 November 1862 in *Mein Leben*:

> … I had been keeping up my old acquaintances in Vienna. A strange incident had occurred at the outset of this visit. I was to read my *Meistersinger* for the Standhartner family, just as I had done everywhere else: since Herr Hanslick was now considered a friend of mine, they thought it would be a good idea to invite him as well; but here we noticed in the course of the reading that this fearsome critic became constantly paler and angrier, and remarkably enough, when the reading was over he could not be persuaded to remain for a time, but departed at once in obvious vexation. My friends all concluded that Hanslick had interpreted the entire libretto as a pasquinade directed at him and our invitation to the reading as an insult. And the critic's attitude toward me indeed underwent a highly noticeable change from that evening forward and turned into bitter enmity …[36]

Something had upset Hanslick that evening. Yet Wagner, who while compiling *Mein Leben* was looking back on all his encounters with the critic well after his hostility to the composer and his style were well known, assumes as benign an attitude towards his nemesis as can be expected. There is no mention of the composer having been uncomfortable with Hanslick's presence amongst a gathering of "old acquaintances," and Wagner suggests there was a collective invitation extended to the critic as well. Had

[36] ML, 703-4.

Wagner suspected the depths of Hanslick's dislike for his works, there would have been little reason to expect the composer to invite the critic to a reading of a libretto that so overtly lampoons conservativism.

Even if one logically assumes that critics in general — and perhaps indeed Hanslick himself in specific — were the main targets of Wagner's parody in *Die Meistersinger*, there are still obvious remnants of Wagner's racial stereotyping detectable in the basic outline of *Die Meistersinger*, although ultimately the fundamental thoroughness of his depictions of Jewishness in "Das Judenthum in der Musik" cannot be carried over wholesale into the plot any more so than all of his theories espoused in *Oper und Drama* could be brought to life in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. For example, the use of melismatic style in and of itself is not inherently a code for Jewish style because it is stylistically appropriate to the Meistersingers, as we have seen. — Indeed, were florid singing by itself a sign of Jewish decadence, Wagner would have probably lumped a whole generation of Italian *bel canto* composers in with Meyerbeer in his critique. — Yet Beckmesser's desperate clinging to this archaic style that is being supplanted even by his fellow Meistersingers is a central thrust of Wagner's argument in "Das Judenthum in der Musik":

> Dem jüdischen Tonsetzer bietet sich nun als einziger musikalischer Ausdruck seines Volkes die musikalische Feier seines Jehovadienstes dar: die Synagoge ist der einzige Quell, aus welchem der Jude ihm *verständliche volksthümliche* Motive für seine Kunst schöpfen kann. Mögen wir diese musikalische Gottesfeier in ihrer ursprünglichen Reinheit auch noch so edel und erhaben uns vorzustellen gesonnen sein, so müssen wir desto bestimmter ersehen, daß diese Reinheit nur in allerwiderwärtigster Trübung auf uns gekommen ist: hier hat sich seit Jahrtausenden Nichts aus innerer Lebensfülle weiterentwickelt, sondern Alles ist, wie im Judenthum überhaupt, in Gehalt und Form starr halten geblieben. Eine Form, welche nie durch Erneuerung des Gehaltes belebt

> wird, zefällt aber; ein Ausdruck, dessen Inhalt längst nicht mehr lebendiges Gefühl ist, wird sinnlos und verzerrt sich.[37]
>
> [The musical ceremony of his Jehovah service presents itself as the only musical expression of his people to the Jewish music maker: the synagogue is the only source from which the Jew can draw *intelligible, traditional* motives for his art. Should we wish to imagine this musical Divine Service in its original purity as noble and elevated, then we would have to gather particularly that that purity has come down to us only as a thoroughly repulsive debasement: nothing has developed in this realm out of the abundance of life for the past millennia, but instead everything has remained immutable with respect to substance and form, as in all areas of Judaism. Yet a form that is never reinvigorated through renovation of its contents decays; an expression whose contents are long since no longer a vivid feeling becomes senseless and distorted.]

This argument, as unabashedly based on stereotypes and racially motivated as it is, exposes a central thrust of Wagner's belief about art: It must not remain stagnant, maintaining the status quo — to do so is to perpetuate a lie, a "debasement" of its original purpose; instead, art must change to be continually able to express a meaningful identity for a people. Wagner maintains that as Jewish people shared no common language or heritage other than their religious experience and practices, only their religious services could provide the material on which Jewish composers could hope to build a national style. As faulty and clouded as his judgment is here with respect to a people, his ideas about the need for art to regenerate itself were crucial to his own development. This is the true nature of the jab Wagner takes at recalcitrant critics in *Die Meistersinger*.

The continuation of this passage has provided the springboard for the argument that the composer's anti-Semitism shows through so clearly in the character of Beckmesser:

> Wer hat nicht Gelegenheit gehabt, von der Fratze des gottesdienstlichen Gesanges in einer eigentlichen Volks-Synagoge sich zu überzeugen? Wer ist nicht von der widerwärtigsten Empfindung, gemischt von Grauenhaftigkeit und Lächerlichkeit, ergriffen worden beim Anhören

[37] GS 5, 76.

> jenes Sinn und Geist verwirrenden Gegurgels, Gejodels und Geplappers, das keine absichtliche Karrikatur widerlicher zu entstellen vermag, als es sich hier mit vollem naiven Ernste darbietet?[38]
>
> [Who has not had the opportunity to convince himself of the grotesquerie of religious singing in an actual synagogue of the people? Who is not seized by the most repulsive impression, a mixture of horror and ridicule, on hearing that very sense- and spirit-confusing gurgling, yodeling, and jabbering, such that no intentional caricature could disfigure it more repulsively than it is presented there in complete, naïve seriousness?]

This is the passage Weiner cites in defense of his position that the vocal style Wagner chose for Beckmesser's serenade in particular is meant as a parody of Jewish practice.[39] Were it not for the fact that, as detailed above, a style that could in some fashion be described as vaguely similar was to be found in the music of the historical Mastersingers, Weiner's argument would seem unassailable. Yet one is left to wonder exactly how Wagner could have hoped to recreate a stylized archaic posture for his most conservative Meister without admitting florid singing to his vocal line. To be sure, as Weiner notes, Wagner does go on in "Das Judenthum in der Musik" to mention that for a cultivated Jewish composer

> Jene Melismen und Rhythmen des Synagogengesanges nehmen seine musikalische Phantasie ganz in der Weise ein, wie das unwillkürliche Innehaben der Weisen und Rhythmen unseres Volksliedes und Volkstanzes die eigentliche gestaltende Kraft der Schöpfer unserer Kunstgesang- und Instrumental-Musik ausmachte.[40]
>
> [Those melismas and rhythms of the synagogue chants capture his (the Jewish musician's) musical imagination in a way entirely similar to the way that the involuntary hold of the tunes and rhythms of our folk songs and folk dances shaped the actual efforts of the creators of our vocal art music and instrumental music.]

So indeed, there is a sense of a foreign "otherness" in the Jewish people for Wagner that cannot be denied: Their art springs from a different source than that of "the creators of *our* … music." Yet to assume that vocal figuration Wagner attributed to the style of both

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[38] GS 5, 76.
[39] Weiner, 121-22.
[40] GS 5, 77.

the Meistersingers and the Baroque era in general can be equated with Jewish chant seems to suggest that the composer must have long planned to find the perfect vehicle for his musical diatribe against Jewish music-making and then only fortuitously found it with the "foreign" art of the Meistersingers. In fact, it is not so much a matter of Wagner having encoded anti-Semitic parody in Beckmesser's vocal style, which after all he does share to some degree with all the other Mastersingers, as it is that Beckmesser is the most hostile towards any sort of change in the work.

No less a paragon of Germanic music-making and Wagner's antipode, Johannes Brahms was so fond of *Meistersinger* that he requested a copy of that score from its composer in June of 1875 in exchange for the return of Wagner's autograph score of the Paris revision of the "Venusberg" scene from *Tannhäuser* (first performed 13 March 1861).[41] Brahms, who was so often allied with Hanslick in the squabble between the New German School and more conservative composers, evidently either mistook Wagner's parody of the critic or simply did not find it compelling as a personal attack. As evidence of his knowledge and fondness for at least certain aspects of Wagner's work, Brahms seems to quote the end of the Second Act of *Die Meistersinger* in the second of his *Vier Klavierstücke,* op. 119 (published 1893) (Example 20a and b).

In this Intermezzo, Brahms uses one principal theme in different guises in the various sections of the work, moving from E minor to the parallel major and back.

[41] Wagner's letter of 6 June 1875 explains that Brahms, who was in the habit of collecting composers' autograph scores, had obtained the manuscript from their mutual acquaintance and fellow composer Cornelius. Despite Brahms' request for a score of *Meistersinger*, Wagner sent *Das Rheingold* instead, as he had no copies of the other score on hand. Evidently, Brahms was satisfied with this since he did indeed return the manuscript to Wagner, who was keen to include it in a new edition of the *Tannhäuser* score. (See *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 801 and 848-49.)

Significantly, in the coda a motive from the theme emerges transformed in a placid vein, and Brahms adopts the same key (E major), a similar agogic profile, and dynamic in his work that Wagner had used at the end of the riot scene in *Die Meistersinger*. Surely, such an astute composer as Brahms would not have included such an *altertümlich* reference were its antecedent posited on anything but musical quality and *Gemütlichkeit*. Ultimately, the evidently direct attack on Hanslick is no longer of matter, any more so than Wagner's supposedly yet questionably anti-Semitic stance in *Meistersinger*. Instead, as Malcolm MacDonald has noted, in his late piano music "the predominant character is reflective, musing, deeply introspective," as Brahms explores both the past and the present of *fin de siècle* style.[42] Could the "nervous pulse-beat in dactylic rhythm like a charming stammer" in this Intermezzo[43] be a reference to Hanslick and anti-Semitism or merely the sort of backward glance Wagner himself was wont to make? Clearly, the latter more aptly applies equally to both Wagner and Brahms.

Although Wagner's understanding of what we would now term Baroque style encompassed elements from both earlier and later eras, he was less concerned in his own works with maintaining distinctions between authentic stylistic traits than recreating a sort of overarching anachronistic aura. In essence, one could surmise that Wagner's concept of early music encompassed all composers up to the time immediately before Haydn, Gluck, and Mozart. Although there is some validity to this argument, in many ways Wagner does show knowledge of discrete stylistic traits that are neither from earlier

[42] Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms*, The Master Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 355.

[43] MacDonald, 360.

epochs nor from his own time. It is this vast array of material that he subsumed into a sort of pre-Bach era. Not unlike Wagenseil, one of his main sources for information about this time period, Wagner "relied not only on older source material but also on his own observations. The picture he drew was a uniform one without any real sense of historical differentiation," as Volker Mertens has characterized Wagenseil's approach in his treatise on *Meistergesang*.[44]

[44] Volker Mertens, "Wagner's Middle Ages," in *Wagner Handbook*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, trans. and ed. John Deathridge (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 261.

CHAPTER 5

WAGNER AND BACH

> I told R. that, as far as my own feelings were concerned, the difference between Bach and Beethoven lay in the fact that the former called on all my powers, to follow him was a test of intelligence and character, whereas I could give myself over to Beethoven without nay effort of will. R. says: "Bach's music is certainly a conception of the world, his figurations, devoid of feeling, are like unfeeling Nature itself — birth and death, winds, storms, sunshine — all these things take place just like such a figuration; the idea of the individual, in Bach always extraordinarily beautiful and full of feeling, is the same which asserts itself in all this to-ing and fro-ing, as steadfast as the Protestant faith itself..
>
> — Cosima Wagner's diary (Sunday, 12 February 1871)[1]

Significantly, the Baroque composer Wagner admired the most, and the one he commented on repeatedly throughout his career, was Bach, who also was apt to use figuration in both his vocal and instrumental writing and which is similar to that in many passages of Wagner's own works. Despite this focus on Bach's melodic writing, one senses that he came closest to Wagner's ideal as the embodiment of all polyphony had to offer simply because the Baroque composer's rhythmic drive and variety surpassed the somewhat amorphous nature of Palestrina's style. Clearly, this is the direction of the argument in *"Zukunftsmusik"* outlined thus far: the melodies of ancient Greece were highly rhythmic, this element was lost in the Middle Ages and was still lacking when harmony was cultivated in Renaissance polyphony, but finally by Bach's time all three elements joined together. Wagner seems to have been happily unaware of the Baroque doctrine of the affections, which surely would have supported his argument for a great unity of purpose and thus style in Bach's music.

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[1] CTa, 336.

Wagner also took a special pride in claiming Bach as a German composer and one who endowed a national style distinct from the more superficial Italianate style developed especially in opera. Whereas Italian composers were apt to write solely with the voice in mind, Bach wrote profoundly whatever his selected medium. Often as the Wagners enjoyed domestic music-making featuring Bach's keyboard works, Wagner would comment on the disparity he saw between his fellow musician from Thuringia and other composers and their national styles. Although there are many references to Bach throughout his published writings, the comments Wagner made in private about the Baroque composer's music are often even more revealing and provide crucial clues as to the kind of inspiration Wagner gained from these works.

Using mainly Glasenapp's biography as a source of information about music Wagner played and discussed in the confines of his home, Geck is one of the few to give serious consideration to the composer's reception of Bach as viewed through the prism of not only Wagner's published writings but also these important daily accounts.[2] Wagner could have been no more direct than on 18 December 1877 when he played through two preludes from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* [*Das wohltemperirten Clavier*] (1722 and 1744) and remarked, "That gave me my direction. It is incredible how many things in music passed me by without leaving an impression, but that determined me. It is infinite! No one else has ever done anything like it!"[3] Not insignificantly, the composer's wife also noted immediately thereafter that day was also Weber's birthday. Perhaps Cosima

[2] See especially Geck, 128-32 and 134-42.

[3] CTa, 1007. Unfortunately, Cosima neglected to record the key of the specific prelude to which Wagner was referring, although she did leave a blank space in its place so that she might fill it in later.

was suggesting that Wagner was intent on paying homage not to the composer from whom he obviously drew many stylistic features but instead that he wished to sidestep Weber in favor of Bach as the one who "determined" him in his course as a composer.[4]

Even though we cannot know for sure which specific prelude it was that Wagner maintained gave him direction as a composer, it is clear from his comments on pieces in the *WTC* what he got out of them: According to Wagner, Bach composed almost programmatic character pieces by relying especially on figures in each piece. Wagner enunciated these views not in so many transparent words but by commenting on the character he recognized in each of Bach's works. Fortunately, Cosima did record many details of her husband's running commentary and tutelage when they began a cyclic yet sporadic study/performance of the *WTC* with Josef Rubinstein (1847-84) at Wahnfried on Tuesday, 17 December 1878, as the first entry on this subject shows:

> We move on to Bach, start the *48 Preludes and Fugues* from the beginning and play the first six. R. gives Herr R[ubinstein] directions; after the first he says the remarkable thing about these works is that one can interpret them in different ways — this first prelude [BWV 846], for instance, sentimentally *à la* Gounod or fast and vigorous in organ style. I ask Herr R. to note down at once in pencil everything that R. says, but he does not seem able to do it properly, and so all I can say about the Fugue in D Major [BWV 850, in the style of a French overture with dotted rhythms] is that he calls it the "Mayor" and says the figuration should arouse a feeling of trepidation; the countertheme he calls the "Mayoress," and to the concluding bars he sings the words "My will has been done." The sixth fugue, in D minor [BWV 851], is the one he finds most wonderful: "Nothing can surpass that. It does not look worked out. What a command he has over his means of expression, using them just as his inspiration demands! And in those times, imagine — the time of Frederick the Great's father and his smokers' gatherings!" — He talks about Bach's fate, his return from a journey to find his wife already dead and buried, and in this connection recalls Rancé, the founder of the Trappist order. — Afterward he declares that these preludes and fugues and the motets are probably the most consummate of Bach's works; as regards the *complete* Passion [the *St. Matthew Passion*], he cannot say whether it should be considered their

[4] Geck suggests that Wagner played the *WTC* preludes to commemorate Weber's birthday. Certainly, Wagner would have played Weber's own music had he wanted to so honor his predecessor. — Wagner did indeed play Weber's music at home on several occasions. — In fact, there is not even any indication that Wagner was the one who noted the significance of the day; it could have just as easily been an afterthought by Cosima, as it is at the end of the day's entry. (See Geck, 130.)

> equal, but — he adds — it was performed in church, by the congregation, and that is how it should be.[5]

Clearly, Wagner knew these pieces well and commented on his impressions of them as though he were encountering old friends. His comments almost always allude to stylistic features present in the very figuration Bach used to construct each movement. For example, the figuration that "should arouse a feeling of trepidation" in BWV 850 is the rapid wave of sixteenth notes that ornament the opening of the fugue subject and serves as unifying motive throughout the episodes (Example 21).

While the point of Wagner's reference about the "Mayor" and "Mayoress" in BWV 850 must remain nebulous, there are many examples in Cosima's Diaries of Wagner likening his own works to individual movements in Bach's *WTC*. Just days later, Wagner said of the E-flat major Prelude, BWV 852, "That is Wotan — it (and especially the first 9 bars) must be played wildly. The ensuing fugue is the pacification, the good wife who dresses nicely, calms her husband down."[6] As odd as the latter reference is for anyone who knows the character of Fricka in Wagner's *Ring*, the persistent scalar sixteenth-note figuration over pedals that make up the bulk of this prelude is very much like a lot of the restless accompaniment Wagner often uses to portray Wotan. The even more hectic brief toccata-like passage (mm. 8-9) in thirty-second notes demarcates the end of the section to which Wagner directly referred, providing a truly "wild" conclusion to the opening gesture in Bach's work. Curiously, only Bach's use of the major mode does not jibe with the darker, more somber and volatile character of the minor that

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[5] CTb, 230.

[6] CTb, 232; entry for Wednesday, 18 December 1878.

Wagner routinely needed to depict his god's agitation throughout the lengthy drama. Hearing Bach's work and knowing Wagner heard some aspect of his character foreshadowed therein, one almost wonders if there may be another side of Wotan's (and Fricka's) character.

Cosima immediately thereafter recorded Wagner's comments on the next fugue in the *WTC*, BWV 853 in E-flat minor, as Rubinstein played. These comments reveal in a more general way the deep-felt connection Wagner felt to Bach's work, as well as what how he views their importance in the development of music and his own musical language:

> The following fugue R. considers the most remarkable of all; he says it is extraordinarily elaborate, yet so full of feeling: "What strettos and augmentations it has — and what accents!" For him, he says, it is the quintessence of fugue, as fugues in his own album, which he regrets having lost, would clearly have shown.[7]

Wagner's analytical comments remind him of his own composition album, which featured fugues he worked on as exercises in Leipzig for his studies with Weinlig. It is evident from Wagner's account in *Mein Leben* that he had been working on contrapuntal works when he began his studies with Weinlig:

> Very frail and sickly, he at first refused to take me as a pupil when my mother approached him. After having long resisted the most heartfelt pleas, he seems finally to have taken a kindly pity on me because of the sorry state of my musical training, which he easily recognized from a fugue I had brought along … I was summoned by Weinlich [*sic*] to appear one morning at seven o'clock, in order to work out a fugue under his supervision by mid-day. He actually devoted the whole morning to me, giving each bar I wrote his closest and most instructive scrutiny. At about twelve o'clock he dismissed me with the assignment to complete the sketch at home by filling out all the contrapuntal voices. When I brought him the completed fugue he gave in return his own version of the same theme for comparison. The joint work on fugues became the basis for the most productive affection between me and my genial teacher, for we both enjoyed further such tasks immensely…. In eight weeks I had not only gone through a number of the most intricate fugues but also had waded quickly through the most difficult contrapuntal exercises, when one day, after I had handed him an extremely elaborate double fugue, he took my breath away by telling me I

[7] CTb, 232.

> should have the piece framed because he had nothing more to teach me. As I had not been conscious of any great effort in doing all this, I often wondered for some time afterwards whether I could be considered a formally trained musician. Weinlich [*sic*] himself did not seem to attach much importance to what he had taught me: he said, "Probably you will never write fugues or canons. What you have achieved, however, is self-sufficiency. You now stand on your own two feet and know that you can use the most refined techniques if you need to."[8]

As his teacher pointed out, due to the fashion of his times, Wagner would not become a composer of fugues, and although he worked on more contemporary instrumental music with Weinlig, such as piano sonatas and orchestral overtures, among other works, under the influence of Beethoven, it was the fugue that stuck in the young composer's mind.

Previously, Wagner had given a similar account of the culmination of his studies with Weinlig in "*Zukunftsmusik*," however with a nationalistic twist at the expensive of Italian composers:

> Rossini soll einst seinen Lehrmeister gefragt haben, ob er zum Opernkomponiren die Erlernung des Kontrapunktes nöthig habe? Da dieser, mit dem Hinblick auf die moderne italienische Oper, die Frage verneinte, stand der Schüler gern ab. Nachdem mein Lehrer mich schwierigsten kontrapunktistischen Künste gelehrt hatte, sagte er mir: "Wahrscheinlich werden Sie nie in den Fall kommen, eine *Fuge* zu schreiben; allein daß Sie sie schreiben können, wird Ihnen technische Selbstandigkeit geben und alles Übrige Ihnen leicht machen".[9]
>
> [Rossini was once said to have asked his teacher whether he needed to learn counterpoint to compose opera. Because the teacher, with an eye on modern Italian opera, said no to the question, the student gladly refrained. After my teacher had taught me the most difficult contrapuntal arts, he said to me, "Probably the occasion will never come when you shall write a *fugue*; just being able to write one will give you technical self-reliance, and the rest will come easy to you."]

One wonders how the mystical ability Wagner gained in his studies of counterpoint made him better suited to compose opera than Rossini. Of course, at the time of his studies with Weinlig, instrumental music was Wagner's primary focus anyway. The real point seems to be by having conquered the ancient art of the fugue, a young composer would

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[8] ML, 55-56. Wagner consistently used the spelling "Weinlich" for his teacher's name in *Mein Leben*.

[9] GS 7, 96.

now find other musical challenges less daunting. It is as though his studies did not so much teach him how to compose well as prepare him to do so in his own right.

Although Wagner had performed a Bach motet in Dresden, his discussions of contrapuntal music in general certainly do not suggest he would have relished the Baroque master's fugues. In fact, just as he had relied on musical styles of past epochs in writing especially *Tannhäuser*, by about 1860, as the *Meistersinger* project increasingly caught his imagination, he sought out ways to expand his anachronistic techniques. *Die Meistersinger* had originally been conceived as a comedic counterpart to *Tannhäuser*, in which the first work depicted the time of the Minnesinger and the latter the time of the Meistersinger. Again, Wagner's interest was less in recreating any particular era than in giving a sort of overarching historic coloring to his composition. Thus, his appreciation for Bach grew as Wagner himself adapted aspects of his contrapuntal style for his own compositional needs.

Many of Wagner's comments about Bach in general and his contrapuntal writing in particular offer further proof of his notion that this style was very much a culmination of an epoch in the development of Western music. Returning to the essential diary entry for Wednesday, 18 December 1878, Cosima continued recording Wagner's observations:

> And when today's six [preludes and fugues] have been played he exclaims, "That is music in its true essence; everything we compose is applied music — a rondo by Hummel, for instance, is Bach diluted so-and-so many times, in the way one dilutes essence of roses so-and-so many times to obtain the familiar fragrance." "To give continuity to a dance melody — that is what he has succeeded in doing here; later one used figurations to isolate, to link." — He explains to the children (Lusch and Boni) what a fugue is. Then he says, "Let us now play some applied Bach," and takes out the piano-duet arrangement of the *Ms*. Prelude; then, since his fingers are not

> working well, he asks Herr R. [Rubinstein] to play it solo; he does it very nicely, but for me R.'s [Wagner's] participation is priceless, irreplaceable, for he sets the tempo….[10]

Clearly, for Wagner music after Bach was in a state of decline. Bach had achieved a sense of continuity in his music. Even though Wagner seems to have been blissfully ignorant about Baroque aesthetics, he has intuitively crystallized the concept of a unity of affect in each individual movement by noting that Bach's constant figuration succeeded in creating unity where later composers would use similar material merely to connect various passages. Bach's musical figures are the essence of his works, not gestures used as filler. Wagner singled out Bach's figurations for praise on Monday, 1 April 1878: "… several things from Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues*, and R. cannot praise highly enough the remarkable singing quality of the figurations."[11] The motivic material is melodic and lyrical, not awkward.

Although the fugato section of the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* might be taken as the source of Wagner's comment of his work being "applied Bach," the position of the section right before the reprise of the opening material seems to suggest Classical procedures in sonata form instead. Taken in the broadest sense then and seen in light of the above, Wagner seems to be claiming his composition as "applied Bach" on several different levels: First, the contrapuntal nature of Wagner's style is very much in the fore in the final section of the prelude, with themes piled up on top of each other, not unlike a fugue with multiple countersubjects (Example 22). The "Guild" (commonly referred to

[10] CTb, 232; "Lusch and Boni" are Daniela (1860-1940) and Blandine (1863-1941) respectively, Cosima's children from her first marriage (1857-70) to Hans von Bülow (1830-94).

[11] CTb, 56.

in German as the "Zunftmarsch") motive is presented in diminution and marked staccato (and *scherzando* in the strings). The "Preislied" theme is to be played *sehr ausdrucksvoll*, with swelling dynamics. The bass line is the Meistersinger theme and, having the loudest dynamic marking, is meant to be heard clearly here [*mf (aber sehr markiert)*], for it is a recapitulatory gesture of the opening of the prelude. Melody ("Preislied"), bass line (Meistersinger motive), and accompanimental figure ("Zunftmarsch") are all thematic in their own right. Incidentally, the fact that Wagner borrowed the "Guild" theme from an actual historic *Thon* transcribed by Wagenseil is by now well known. As Linnenbrügger demonstrates, Wagner was likely inspired by the version composed by Heinrich Frauenlob (ca. 1250-1318), although the version by Heinrich Mügling [Mögeling, von Mügling, or von Mügeln] (? - after 1369) is certainly similar and was initially cited by Warrack and Dahlhaus, among others, as the original source (Example 23).[12]

Second, because the thematic material has meaning both within the musical design of the prelude and as motives referring to the ensuing drama, Wagner has succeeded in avoiding resorting to figuration as filler "to isolate [or] to link." As just noted, all of the material is germane and indeed essential to the work as a whole. Finally, as noted in a previous discussion, a chorale opens Act One and follows the prelude with no break. The Bachian affect of the prelude is thus continued immediately into the opera proper, maintaining a fitting continuity and thus again avoiding non-essential, isolated

[12] Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, cf. 48-50, especially fn. 87. In fact, Wagner previously had the same examples in Hagen's collection: vol. 4, 926 (Frauenlob, in white mensural notation), 932 (Mügling, in modern notation) and 933 (Frauenlob, in modern notation). Unlike Wagenseil, Hagen gives the complete *Weise*, including both *Stollen* and *Abgesang*.

musical material. As abrupt as the shift is from the full orchestra in the prelude to the chamber-like scoring accompanying the chorale (see Example 4), this is a dramatic effect and not one created by random non-essential shifts in musical style. The essence of Wagner's style here remains remarkably consistent, despite the dramatic shift in mood. Furthermore, during the chorale, the orchestra maintains the "Preislied" material from the prelude, while the chorale echoes the contour of the original "Meistersinger" theme. Two of the principal themes from the prelude are thus prominent in this passage as well, again demonstrating that Wagner's dramatic shift is not also accompanied by an arbitrary change in musical style. The accompanying figures are all germane to the unfolding music drama.

As his comment about Hummel hinted, Wagner also felt Bach's music was more essence than filler in another sense, as he averred repeatedly. Relying only on Cosima's diary, where Wagner could be absolutely candid as he opined about music after Bach's time, one finds a myriad of statements that amplify the core of Wagner's argument. As early as 1872, several years earlier than their somewhat regular complete traversal of the *WTC*, Cosima notes

> J. Rubinstein['s] … piano playing pleases us greatly, in particular a fugue by Bach (from the *48 Preludes and Fugues*, D-flat [C-sharp] Major) puts us into ecstasies … R. says: "… it is like a restless forward striding, as if he were saying: 'Here you have everything with which you will later work, where you will lie down and rest; I know it all already, I must go on.' A sphinx — but that is German. How shallow and conventional does the sonata form — that product of Italy — seem in comparison! It was only by breathing such tremendous life into the accessories of this form that Beethoven brought music back close to Bach."[13]

[13] CTa, 511; entry for Saturday, 13 July 1872. It is not clear from the context whether this is the third fugue in Book I or II of the *WTC*. Both have features that fit Wagner's description.

Clearly, in Wagner's mind, what Bach attained represented not only the essence of music but also all that would be needed in the future. Bach's style is profound and thus typically Germanic, defying simple description, a riddle for a solution, "a sphinx." It cannot be reduced to a mere conventional form like the sonata. Of course, this has something to do with the nature of a fugue, but that is part of the mystique of Bach's music, for even fugues can be conventional, following similar compositional plans.

As if to prove there is a fundamental difference between Bach and his contemporaries, on 28 February 1879, after having played BWV 886 through 889 in Book II of the *WTC*, Wagner commented that one only had to compare Bach's works "with what others understood by fugues, for example, Handel in the Overture to *Messiah*; since we do not have this work we look at *Samson*, and R. says the allegro theme denotes the Philistines."[14] Whereas Bach's fugues represent something essential, Handel's are representational or, at the very least, programmatic in his dramatic music as far as Wagner was concerned. And Handel's approach is less rigorous and thorough than one finds in Bach, perhaps indeed due the entirely different functions the pieces were meant to serve. – Still, one wonders if Wagner, of all people, understood the great irony of him dismissing Handel's work because he found them so easily understood as mere stage-setting.

Another related theory Wagner had was that the fundamental difference between music in Bach's time and that afterwards was due to the fact that before the commercialization of music composers really were essentially composing many of their

[14] CTb, 271-72.

works for their own use. Wagner maintained that this commercialization created a certain superficiality in later music. For example, earlier in February 1879, he commented that one of the preludes and fugues they were going over was

> a complete transition to more modern music. He says Bach must have played it to his wife. Previously he [Wagner] had emphasized the extent to which these works were written by their composers for themselves, and how superficial the works their successors wrote for other people seemed in comparison — the sonatas. "They have also given us some good things, of course, but this is like birth itself." He then goes on to point out the difference between Bach and the Italian composers of the same period, talks of a figured "*Kyrie eleison*" and tells us how as children he and his sisters imagined they were singing fugues when they sang these figurations to themselves.[15]

As a child, Wagner equated works with a lot of Baroque figuration with fugues, a genre that we have seen he seems to have connected firmly in his mind with Bach by the time of his studies with Weinlig.[16] The difference that seems to have eventually dawned on Wagner and that he alludes to repeatedly as he went through the *WTC* is that Bach's figuration is an essential compositional feature used to create affect – even though Wagner never used the word – not something added for effect. The superficiality of later works was due to this addition of accompanimental, rather than motivic, figures.

In many cases, between Wagner's own recollections in *Mein Leben* and the anecdotal evidence provided in Cosima's diaries as well as references Wagner makes in his own writings, it is possible to date the composer's initial contacts with the works of his predecessors. For example, in his autobiography Wagner recounts several of his early encounters with Weber's *Der Freischütz.* As a child, he heard the Huntsmen's Chorus played by the Hussar regimental band in Eisleben in 1822, the year after its premiere in

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[15] CTb, 264-5; entry for Sunday, 2 February 1879. BWV 881 was the work that generated the discussion.

[16] See also Chapter 4.

Berlin.[17] The music made a deep and immediate impression on Wagner, and when back in Dresden several years later, he recalled with some awe Kapellmeister Weber's visits to their home to hear Wagner's older sister Clara (1807-1875) sing. Through her Wagner also came to know intimately music she was working on, such as Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (the role of Zerlina) and the title role in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, her debut role in Dresden in 1824.[18] Thus, it is possible to date with some certainty Wagner's initial contacts with various composers and their works. Curiously, there is no such mention of Bach or any of his works in Wagner's formative years, as Geck notes.[19] We do know that Wagner encountered Bach's style enough to have been at least vaguely familiar with the concept of fugue even as a child ("he and his sisters imagined they were singing fugues") and that he did have occasion to examine some of Bach's fugues with Weinlig. We can even assume Wagner had some more thorough understanding of what fugal writing entailed even before he began his studies with Weinlig, according to his discussions of the facility with which he developed as a composer of that genre. Furthermore, as noted previously, Wagner certainly did not arrive at his appreciation for Bach through Weinlig. The closest anyone has come to determining the manner of Wagner's first contact with the music of Bach is Glasenapp, who quotes Wagner saying he took up the *WTC* in his youth with "a sort of *ennui*" ["einer Art ennui"], suggesting his

[17] ML, 8.
[18] ML, 27.
[19] Geck, 124.

sense of apprehension or perhaps boredom.[20] Nonetheless, Wagner's comments about Bach make it clear that he had a deep familiarity with many of the Baroque master's works.

It should not be surprising then that there are indeed other points of reference between works by the two composers. As the Wagners and Rubinstein continued their reading of the *WTC*, Wagner frequently made comparisons between his own compositions, especially *Die Meistersinger*, and Bach's works. These comments demonstrate more possible sources of inspiration for Wagner. For example, the Prelude in C-sharp minor, BWV 849, was clearly a favorite of Wagner's, and he played it in an arrangement for four hands with Hans Richter (1843-1916) at Tribschen in 1867.[21] Richter, who was later to conduct the first complete *Ring* cycles at Bayreuth in 1876, recalled the event at length, perhaps repeating Wagner's own sentiments:

> Sonntag, den 29. Sept. saßen wir, Wagner und ich, beim Klavier und spielten 4händig die Bach'sche Praeludien und Fugen aus dem "wohltemperierten Clavier". Freunde! Das war nicht der alte Zopf, der Fugen- und Contrapunkt-Vater! Nein, das war das Urbild der C-moll-Symphonie von Beethoven; die Werke des größten Tondichters, des Gründers deutscher Musik. Wie klang das ganz anders als ich es gewohnt war zu hören. Oh, dieser Wagner! Es läßt sich nicht beschreiben, welche dämonische Gewalt in diesen Werken liegt, wenn sie nach meines erhabenen Meisters Auffassung gespielt werden. Als wir bei der Cis-moll-Phantasie ankamen, da konnte ich mich nicht mehr halten, die Thränen stürzten mir aus den Augen. Auch Wagner war ganz ergriffen von der Macht Bach'scher Töne. Einmal über das anderemal rief er aus: "Ist doch der größte Meister." Dann sagte er mir, das sollte ich von Liszt hören.[22]
>
> [On Sunday, the 29th of September, we sat, Wagner and I, at the piano and played four-hands Bach's preludes and fugues from the "Well-Tempered Clavier." Friends! This was not the old-fashioned father of fugues and counterpoint! No, it was the prototype of the C-minor Symphony of Beethoven; the work of the greatest tone-poet, the founder of German music. How completely different it sounded from what I was used to hearing. Oh, that Wagner! The demonic powers that

[20] Carl Friedrich Glasenapp, *Das Leben Richard Wagners*, Band 6, 3d ed. (Leipzig, 1911), 165; quoted in Geck, 124.

[21] Geck, 128.

[22] Cited by Geck, 128, from H. Sitte, *Bachs "Chromatische,"* (Berlin, 1921), 26. (Richter goes on to describe hearing Liszt play this same work a few days later as "a landmark in my artistic career.")

> lie in this work when played in the interpretation of my lofty master cannot be described. When we came to the C-sharp minor Fantasy, I could no longer hold back the rush of tears from my eyes. Wagner was also totally moved by the power of Bach's tones. Once, at another point, he called out, "(He) is indeed the greatest master." Then he said to me that I ought to hear Liszt play it.]

Richter's anecdote reveals much about interpretation at the time, a point to which Wagner himself will allude in reference to another selection in the *WTC*. Also, just after the time of *Tristan* and *Meistersinger*, we can see that Wagner was already an established exponent of Bach's music, showing it to his young assistant and hoping to foster an even deeper understanding through a performance by a much greater keyboardist than himself.

This account also aids in understanding Wagner's comments made on Thursday, 7 March 1878 when he discussed this same work by Bach and hinted at its connection to one of his own compositions:

> In the evening conversation with our friend [Marie von Schleinitz (1842-1912)], then some music — the Prelude to Act III of *Die Msinger*: "At that time I was a lonely man," says R. "I no longer need such consolation." Memories of the performance of *Die Meistersinger* in Munich: "The loveliest experience of my artistic life-it was virtually perfect." Then R. plays the C-sharp Minor Prelude [BWV 849] from [Bach's] *48 Preludes and Fugues*. An indescribable impression — it echoes within us like the quiet lament of a sphinx, or vanishing gods, or Nature before the creation of mankind! R. says he has been composing it himself ever since his childhood, but he is not sure whether he plays it properly. The sonata, he says, brought shallowness to this original form of prelude and fugue; it was [Carl] Philipp Emanuel [Bach] who introduced this Italianate style, and all instrumental music since then has sounded like a concert, a Court concert, when compared with this revelation. And just think what Bach himself looked like, with his half-blind, anxious eyes, like Beethoven; musicians are like that, curious creatures! … Before that R. played various Italian themes, from Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*, *La Straniera*, and *Norma*, and said: "For all the poverty of invention, there is real passion and feeling there, and the right singer has only to get up and sing it for it to win all hearts. I have learned things from them which Messrs. Brahms & Co. have never learned, and they can be seen in my melodies." After playing the C-sharp Minor Prelude, he observes, with reference to the Italian melodies whose peculiar passion we have just acknowledged, "That is *pour le monde*, but this (the Prelude) is the world itself."[23]

Again, Wagner notes the primordial nature he detects in Bach's music ("Nature before the creation of mankind"), in contrast to melodic writing by his contemporaries, taking a

[23] CTb, 34-35. Baroness Schleinitz had been a confidant of Cosima's for over a decade and proved to be a formidable fundraiser for Wagner's Bayreuth endeavor.

pot shot at Brahms even while defending Bellini. Bach's music communicates on a wholly different level than *bel canto* melodies.

Of more interest is the statement that Wagner has been (re)composing Bach's prelude "ever since his childhood," again suggesting Wagner had known this music for a long time, despite his omission of that detail in *Mein Leben*. Wagner also reveals his loneliness at the time of his composition of at least the Prelude to Act III of *Die Meistersinger*. At that time, Cosima was still married to Hans von Bülow, and she and Wagner had already begun an affair that resulted in the birth of their daughters Isolde in 1865 and Eva in 1867. Yet the pair could not live together, and his patron King Ludwig II of Bavaria had banned Wagner from Munich for a variety of reasons, not least of which was royal disapproval of the aforementioned affair. Thus, Wagner was cut off from both Cosima and the city where his works had the best chance of being performed successfully. The triumphant premiere of *Meistersinger* in Munich on 21 June 1868 was very much a vindication for the exiled composer. Ironically, Wagner himself said, "musicians are like that, curious creatures!" In a way, his success with a popular work such as *Meistersinger* must have also served as a consolation for the composer who had to fight so long and hard for his previous effort *Tristan* even to make it to the stage, not so incidentally also in Munich as "a Court concert."

Wagner recounted the inspiration for his composition of the Prelude to Act Three of *Die Meistersinger* several times in some detail.[24] The autobiographical details shed further light on his recollections of loneliness that served as an inspiration for his composition. As Linnenbrügger explains, Wagner sketched the Prelude to Act Three while working on the First Act due to a real-life happenstance. Like Hans Sachs, who received a delivery of flowers on his name day (*Johannistag*, St. John's Day) in the drama, Wagner found himself alone on the morning of his birthday, 22 May 1862, in Biebrich when flowers were delivered. He wrote to his former lover Mathilde Wesendonck in Zurich:

> It is my birthday today. Flowers have been delivered to my house. I was ill, and not until yesterday did I go out into the park again. I have had little cause to think of you, since I can no longer be of any help to you but only cherish silent hopes for your well-being.
>
> Thus I sat alone.
>
> I was suddenly struck by an idea for the orchestral introduction to the third act of the Mastersingers. This act will be crowned by a most moving climax at the moment when Sachs rises to his feet before the assembled populace and is received by them with a sublime outpouring of enthusiasm. At this point the people sing in bright and solemn tones the first eight lines of Sachs's poem to Luther. The music for this was already written. Now, for the introduction to the 3rd act, when the curtain rises and Sachs is discovered sitting there in deep contemplation, I shall have the bass instruments play a soft, tender and profoundly melancholic passage that bears the imprint of the greatest resignation: then, on the horns and sonorous wind instruments, [like a gospel] comes the solemnly joyful bright-toned melody of "Awake! for dawn is drawing near: and from the woodland green I hear a rapture-laden nightingale": the melody adds its voice to what has gone before and is increasingly developed by the orchestra.
>
> It has now become clear to me that this work will be my most perfect masterpiece and – that I shall live to complete it.
>
> But I wanted to give myself a birthday present; I shall do so by sending you this news.[25]

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[24] Linnenbrügger provides the most thorough overview of these accounts in his study of the Act I *Meistersinger* sketches; see vol. 1, 185ff. The focus there is, of course, different from the present study. However, Linnenbrügger's catalog of the primary sources related to the first sketch of the Act III Prelude proved invaluable in constructing the present argument.

[25] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 545. The phrase in brackets was not included by the translators and is reinstated based on Linnenbrügger's quotation of the original in German (cf. Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 189, and vol. 2, 123).

Because Wagner had been ill, he could not undertake a planned visit to his estranged first wife Minna (1809-66) in Dresden for his birthday. His letter to her dated the day before explained all this.[26]

On his birthday, Wagner also gave himself further presents by writing similar, albeit more concise, accounts, one of which was addressed to Countess Anna Pourtalès (1827-1892), the wife of the Prussian ambassador in Paris who had given him both hospitality in that city in 1861 and a monetary gift in 1862:

> Von meiner Krankheit genesen, ging mir heute mit gesteigerte Liebe meine Arbeit zu Herzen: sie steht jetzt klar und sicher als meine bedeutendste Leistung vor mir; ich bin des äußersten Gelingens gewiß […] Wenn Sie einst die Enleitung zum dritten Act hören, und dann den Chor, mit dem das Volk Hans Sachs begeistert empfängt (mit Worten aus Hans Sach's Gedicht auf Luther), erinnert Sie sich wohl auch, wie mir an meinem Geburtstage zu Mute war.[27]
>
> [Recovered from illness, today my work filled my heart with increased love: it now clearly and certainly appears to me as my most meaningful achievement; I am certain of its utmost success […] Someday, when you hear the Introduction to the Third Act, and then the chorus with which the people enthusiastically receive Hans Sachs (with words from Hans Sachs's poem about Luther), remember well also how it gave me courage on my birthday.]

Wagner also wrote to Wendelin Weissheimer (1838-1910), a fellow composer and conductor whom he had met in Biebrich, that his younger colleague ought to think of Wagner when hearing this passage: "Gedenken Sie meiner einmal bei der Einleitung zum dritten Act." ["Think of me a little during the Introduction to the Third Act."] Weissheimer found this all to be mysterious and, years later in June 1868 at the rehearsals

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[26] Wagner to Minna Wagner, 21 May [1862], in *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 542-545.

[27] Quoted in Linnenbrügger, vol. 2, 123. Count Albert de Pourtalès (1812-1861) must have been a colorful host for Wagner in Paris, as the ambassador could regale acquaintances with accounts of his tour of America, which he had commenced in 1832. Accompanied by his mentor Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875), the count visited the chief cities of North America and sailed down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Subsequently, they toured the prairies with the American author Washington Irving (1783-1859), known today mainly for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip van Winkle" (both 1819-1820). Both Irving and La Trobe published accounts of this journey, Irving in *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835) and La Trobe in *The Rambler in North America: 1832-1833* (1835). Furthermore, Count Pourtalès had also been the Prussian ambassador to Constantinople before being stationed in Paris.

for the *Meistersinger* premiere, had to confess to Wagner that he never understood what the composer meant by his request to be remembered on hearing his composition.[28]

Significantly, both the Prelude to Act Three itself and the chorus to Sachs's poem on Martin Luther, "Wach auf," were among Wagner's earliest musical conceptions for *Die Meistersinger*, essentially interposing themselves on his imagination as he worked on the First Act. Wagner described the style of this foreshadowing of the massed choral hymn in celebration of Sachs (and Luther) in his letter to Mathilde Wesendonck as "[like a gospel] … the solemnly joyful bright-toned melody of 'Awake!'" Anyone familiar with the chorale-style with its treble-dominated, basically homophonic texture in essentially four parts (SATB) – and after having heard this style at the beginning of Act One, Scene One, this would include anyone in the audience for *Die Meistersinger* (cf. Example 4) – would recognize that Wagner was referring to that practice here (Example 24).

In what amounts to a program note for King Ludwig II, Wagner later described this passage in a letter dated 22 November 1866 as he worked on the score for Act Three. Here, the composer outlines his thematic material: The prelude begins with a "deeply plaintive melody … made up of sustained notes" that had originally been heard as a counterpoint to the main melody of the third verse of the cobbling song ("Schusterlied") sung by Sachs in Act Two. This melody will soon be associated with the idea of "Wahn" ("delusion," "illusion," or "madness") in the scene that follows, and here it is developed "by the other string instruments in an interlacing pattern and brought to a sadly resigned

[28] Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 189-191.

conclusion …" until it is supplanted by the "Wach auf" hymn played by the lower winds "like a blissful premonition" of how the townsfolk will greet Sachs in the final scene, "in a mood of most solemn emotion."[29] Wagner goes on to quote more fragments from the "Schusterlied," which dissolves into "a smile of tender melancholy," with sequential writing that again recalls passages of BWV 849. Then, the winds continue with the second phrase of the chorale, only to be answered with the original plaintive "Wahn" melody from the beginning of the prelude. If one can accept Wagner's style in the "Wach auf" melody as being semiotically encoded as a chorale, once again the composer has resorted to the same type of gapped presentation of such material as noted both elsewhere in *Die Meistersinger* and in *Tannhäuser*, with contrasting material interposed between the phrases of the chorale itself. The imitative interlacing of material is also a hallmark of the Act Three Prelude. Of course, Wagner's inspiration for these procedures can clearly be found in many pieces by Bach, as noted above.

The archaic-sounding, almost directionless harmonies of the chorale further heighten the sense that it is both "solemn" and "like a gospel." Wagner allows the harmonies in the hymn to include unresolved sevenths as well as those with greatly delayed resolutions. Dahlhaus notes that Wagner uses diatonic (rather than chromatic) dissonance to create an anachronistic and a less-than-functional effect.[30] Also, the harmonic vocabulary itself continually seems to avoid traditional progressions, including both retrogressions and odd fluctuations in harmonic rhythm. Wagner's counterpoint is

[29] *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 708.
[30] Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 73.

carefully crafted, with a wedge-shape in the opening phrase fashioned between the melody and bass (loosely echoed in the final phrase in inversion), both similar and complementary scalar motives shifting from voice to voice (sometimes in inversion), and a general preference for conjunct motion in the melody, with a few dramatic leaps. Even though Wagner smoothes over some of this in the reprise later in Act Three when the people salute Sachs, the chorale teeters between the need for regular cadential closure typical with such studied contrapuntal motion and a sense of timelessness to the whole. Of course, both in the prelude and in its subsequent appearance, "Wach auf" sounds quite different from the other material surrounding it. The hymn is not so much a mere example of historical scene painting nor is it fully translated into the harmonic vocabulary of the nineteenth century. Rather, it stands apart as one of the many anachronizing elements in a thoroughly modern work.[31]

Interestingly, on its return, the "Wach auf" chorale is interjected into the scene where the chorus sings it in homage to its poet/composer Hans Sachs. Here it is presented without any gaps to be sure, but it does serve to create a dramatic gap in the reintroduction of the material from the Act One Prelude, certainly a major moment of both musical and dramatic import. This is the first time the material that opened the work has been represented in the order in which it had initially been heard. Wagner uses the entrance of the Meistersingers as an opportunity to include this recapitulatory gesture. The "Meistersinger" theme, with its original counterpoint gradually joining in, is followed by the "Zunftmarsch," which ought to lead to a sort of peroration before things

[31] Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, 73.

settle down and the "Preislied" is introduced, as it had been in the original prelude. However, here Wagner allows the "Zunftmarsch" to die down, as the apprentices call out for "Silentium!" In turn, the spontaneous outpouring of "Wach auf" interrupts as soon as the crowd spots Hans Sachs. Then the expected climax corresponding to that in the prelude concludes with the "Zunftmarsch" again dying away. In this mood "of most solemn emotion," Sachs addresses the assembled folk to a reprise of the material that had both opened and concluded the Prelude to Act Three (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of the presentation of thematic material in passages in *Die Meistersinger*.

Prelude to Act One	Prelude to Act Three	Act Three, Entrance of the Meistersingers
"Meistersinger" theme		"Meistersinger" theme
"Zunftmarsch"		"Zunftmarsch"
	"Wahn" (with imitation)	
	"Wach auf" (part 1)	"Wach auf" (without gap)
	"Schusterlied"	
	"Wach auf" (part 2)	
(climax)		(climax & "Zunftmarsch")
	"Wahn" (with imitation)	"Wahn" (with imitation)
["Preislied"]		[… "Preislied"]

Although admittedly this comparison only accounts for roughly half the opening prelude and greatly compresses the contents of the final scene, it is clear from this cursory outline that just as the opening of *Die Meistersinger* reveals a myriad of thematic ideas, Wagner recapitulates this material in the final scene of his work and includes references to what has happened in the course of the drama, with an important moment being the revelation of the "Preislied" in both cases. Thus, by the end of the drama, Wagner effectively summarizes the various preceding episodes.

As his account to Mathilde Wesendonck mentions, the music for "Wach auf" was already composed when the inspiration for the Prelude to Act Three came to Wagner. *Mein Leben* provides the details of this episode from January 1862 in Paris:

> The melody for that fragment from Hans Sachs' poem saluting the Reformation, with which I have the people greet their beloved master in the last act, occurred to me on the way to the Taverne Anglaise as I was walking through the galleries of the Palais Royal; I found Truinet waiting for me and asked him for a pencil and a piece of paper to jot down my melody, covertly singing it to him as I did so…. on that evening he could do nothing but exclaim: "Mais, quelle gaîté d'espirit, cher maître!"[32]

That the Baroque architecture of the Palais Royal with its columned galleries enclosing a garden with a central fountain should have inspired Wagner to compose his paean to Sachs/Luther in such an outmoded style, even more archaic yet subtle than the opening chorale in the work, can hardly have been a mere accident.

Perhaps why his musical creation in the Prelude to Act Three meant so much to Wagner can best be understood through how it relates autobiographically to the situations in which he found himself. He began the decade of the 1860s still an exile from Saxony and Germany at large, as well as estranged from his wife Minna due a variety of affairs he had engaged in, the most serious of which was that with Mathilde Wesendonck, herself married to one of Wagner's most generous supporters. Indeed, it was this affair that Minna perceived to be the greatest threat to their marriage when she discovered it. Then, unable to contemplate the effects divorce would have on Minna's precarious health, Wagner instead took up with Cosima while she was still married to Hans von Bülow. Thus, Wagner basically could not figure out how to be in a healthy relationship

[32] ML, 673-74. Charles Truinet (1828-1899, pseudonym "Nuitter") was a French librettist and translator, who also founded and directed the archives of the Opéra in Paris. He had worked with Wagner on revising the French translation of *Tannhäuser* for performances there in 1861. Linnenbrügger reproduces this sketch in facsimile (vol. 1, 45) and transcription (vol. 2, 10), revealing Wagner and Truinet had also scrawled a few lines in French and German upside down on the paper, the transcription of which seems suspect. Either they were engaging in a bilingual nonsense game as they ate or, more likely, Wagner was demonstrating some feature of his text setting procedures. Either way, the transcription lacks all the details found in the original. Considering the importance of "Wach auf" to the entire drama, one assumes that even at this early stage in the work's conception Wagner (and his companion) would have appreciated its gravitas.

with any woman to whom he was attracted, for all of them were unavailable, as was he, of course. It should come as no surprise that Wagner moved from place to place so much, finding neither domestic bliss nor refuge for very long in any one place. Even after he and Cosima had dedicated themselves to each other in November 1863, they still could not live together. Furthermore, as he moved further and further away from traditional operatic expression, he found fewer and fewer opportunities to have his works performed or even supported through publication. Even after Ludwig took him in and paid off his debts, Wagner's other problems did not cease. One senses that the acclaim Sachs is afforded in *Die Meistersinger* with everyone saluting him by taking up his composition was something that Wagner desperately longed for himself. Indeed, the way Truinet commented, "Mais, quelle gaîté d'espirit, cher maître!" must have seemed terribly ironic to Wagner, if not at the time, at least as he dictated *Mein Leben* to Cosima, having resolved at least some of the trying issues of his own creation that had plagued him during the difficult decade of the 1860s.

Considering the special personal meaning that Bach's C-sharp minor pairing had for Wagner and the close connection ("think of me") he felt to his own composition ("it gave me courage"), which as noted previously was inextricably and autobiographically linked for Wagner on several occasions to Bach's work, it should come as no surprise that there are indeed musical connections between Bach's prelude, BWV 849, and Wagner's Prelude to Act III of *Meistersinger*. Certainly, they share a similar expressive tone, but more significant are the actual musical features they have in common that help create this semiotic semblance. When Wagner's work is reduced to its original form, as

sketched on his birthday in 1862, the connection between the opening of Bach's prelude (Example 25a) and that of Wagner's work (Example 25b) becomes startlingly patent. Both pieces begin with a descending scale, from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$, with Bach adding an appoggiatura at the end. Then Bach's theme leaps up an octave, while Wagner's exploits the minor sixth to enhance the minor modality with the expressive semitone relationship from $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{5}$. Wagner has also compressed Bach's faster scalar descent and slower climatic leap into a single idea that begins more slowly and then moves in shorter note values before returning to the slower values at the upward leaps, thus maintaining the rhythmic profile of Bach's work, while at the same time greatly simplifying it. The true direction of Wagner's melody is amorphous in the sketch, until he introduces "Wach auf." This theme is clearly only meant as a placeholder in the sketch, as is evidenced by the blank measure, perhaps indicating the gap. Yet the homophonic, chordal nature of the chorale is already clearly evident here. The final return of the contrasting opening material (an octave higher) rounds out this brief sketch that had caused Wagner to dash off so many missives about its conception.

What is lacking in Wagner's sketch are several features at this stage: the quotation of the "Wahn" motive from the "Schusterlied" followed by its use in an imitative "interlacing pattern" Wagner had described to King Ludwig II, as well as any other references to the "Schusterlied" and their subsequent development. Of course, since Wagner was essentially working on the Prelude to Act Three out of turn, he had yet to compose any of Act Two, and thus could not yet quote the "Schusterlied" from that act. Also, it should be noted that Wagner does follow Bach's use of sequential repetitions in

his sketch; after all, Bach's work under consideration is a prelude and not a fugue. Perhaps, like Bach, Wagner intended to create some sort of contrast through employing different instruments for each presentation of his opening motive (as opposed to Bach's changes of register). Whereas the style in the "Wach auf" passage is fairly unambiguous, the same cannot be said for the first section of Wagner's sketch.

At this point, it would be more fruitful to compare Bach's prelude to Wagner's final version of his own prelude (see Example 24 again). Obviously, by this point all the features described to Ludwig are indeed to be found. But evidently the "Wahn" countermelody from the Act Two "Schusterlied" has supplanted the original descending scalar figure. In fact, it is still present in an altered form, with stepwise motion replaced by more expressive leaps. Ignoring the opening phrase (measures 1-4), which spans a minor ninth, in favor of the second phrase (measures 5ff.) in the cello, one finds that this phrase does indeed begin as the sketch had on $\hat{5}$ and descend to $\hat{1}$ in the first two measures (and then beyond). Only an F stands in for what originally had been a C in the sketch (a fifth above). Also, the pitch levels of the repetitions have been changed: what was stepwise sequential heightening in the sketch has become at first a mere repetition an octave higher (viola), before expanding to a minor third up (violin 2) and then up a whole step (violin 1). Note also the asymmetrical delay of the entries, three measures between the first two and then two measures after that. This is totally at odds with the regular two-measure groupings in the sketch. In Wagner's final version, the gap in the "Wach auf" melody is also filled in with the development of material from Act Two in high writing for the strings (*sehr zart und ausdrucksvoll* [very tenderly and expressively]) to

reflect the contemplative mood of Sachs. This too comes directly from Bach's prelude (see especially measures 5ff., for example). Thus, the intertwined autobiographical importance of these two works for Wagner clearly is reflected in the similarities of their musical features.[33]

Another work in the *WTC* was also associated with *Die Meistersinger* by the Wagners. On Sunday, 15 December 1878, Josef Rubinstein played through a couple of fugues for organ by Bach, "then a Prelude in F-sharp Minor (No. 13 [BWV 858]) from the *48 Preludes and Fugues*; since this reminds us of *Die Msinger* ('continuation of Bach'), R. takes out the collection of pieces from *Die Msinger*, and with these brings the evening to a splendid close."[34] Not only was *Meistersinger* reminiscent of Bach; it was a "continuation," as Cosima quotes Wagner. Recall that a few days later Wagner was to call the *Meistersinger* Prelude "applied Bach."[35] In that case, he clearly was referring to musical style and specific techniques. However, in the present case with BWV 858, again there are musical similarities between Bach's work and passages in *Die Meistersinger*.

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[33] Besides the association of BWV 849 with the Prelude to Act Three of *Meistersinger*, Wagner also played Bach's prelude along with the prelude to *Parsifal* for friends at home, after the premiere run of his final opera came to an end in Bayreuth (Friday, 1 September 1882; CTb, 906). Cosima mentions an additional read-through in Venice: after supper "R. plays Bach's C-sharp Minor Prelude, then accompanied by friend Mimi, Marke's speech and Tristan's farewell; finally he plays us I[solde]'s apotheosis. He then says of his piano playing that he plays the same way that Count Sándor used to drive–throwing the reins over the horses' necks and hurtling through the countryside, crying, 'This is how we drive in Hungary!'" (Sunday, 29 October 1882; CTb, 941).

[34] CTb, 229. It is clear that Cosima made a mistake here regarding the mode of Prelude No. 13, as she wrote minor and not major.

[35] CTb, 232; see above.

The F-sharp Major Prelude begins with a short triadic fanfare in the left hand that is imitated immediately in the right (Example 26a). This figure is repeated throughout and often ends in a trill. Then Bach uses a syncopated rhythm in one part against longer note values in the other. This technique creates a complex cross-rhythm out of just two parts, but the fundamental effect is one of a dotted rhythm, not unlike that in a French overture, albeit slightly agogically displased here. It is, of course, not clear exactly of which passage(s) in *Die Meistersinger* Bach's prelude reminded Wagner. However, there are certainly similar features in the music that concludes Act Three, Scene Four, an orchestral interlude to accompany the scene change from Sachs's workshop to the festival meadow outside Nuremberg. The final lines for Sachs and the stage direction here even suggest a procession, setting the scene for the entrance of the various guilds and the Meistersingers themselves in the ensuing scene:

SACHS	
Jetzt All' am Fleck! Den Vater grüß'!	[Now all to your spots! Greet your father!
Auf, nach der Wies' schnell auf die Füß'!	Away, to the meadow, quick on your feet!
(Eva trennt sich von Sachs und Walther, und verläßt mit Magdalene die Werkstatt.)	*(Eva parts from Sachs and Walther and leaves the workshop with Magdalene.)*
Nun, Junker! Kommt! Habt frohen Mut! –	Now, young sir! Come! Cheer up! –
David, Gesell'! Schließ den Laden gut!	David, journeyman! Close up the shop well!
(Als Sachs und Walther ebenfalls auf die Straße gehen, und David sich über das Schließen der Ladenthüre hermacht, wird im Proscenium ein Vorhang von beiden Seiten zusammengezogen, so daß er die Scene gänzlich schließt. – Als die Musik allmählig zu größerer Stärke angewachsen ist, wird der Vorhang nach der Höhe zu aufgezogen. Die Bühne ist verwandelt.)[36]	*(As Sachs and Walther likewise walk out in the street, and David tackles closing the shop doors, a curtain is drawn together from both sides of the proscenium, so that the scene is completely closed. – As the music gradually grows to greater strength, the curtain is goes up. The stage is changed.)*]

[36] GS 7, 256. In the last stage direction, GS has "Als David und Walther ebenfalls …"; this is corrected here based on the published score.

As the characters depart, the orchestra takes up the dotted rhythm of a theme that has been associated with the glory of Nuremberg (Example 26b). This is repeated in sequence and alternated with offstage triadic fanfares on horn and then trumpets. As more of the orchestra enters, the woodwinds introduce trills to the end of the fanfare, much like Bach had used, and the upper strings play rapid scales, echoing the brief orchestral introduction to Act Two of the drama. Surely, these similarities must have been what Wagner was referring to when he called *Meistersinger* "a continuation of Bach," as he moved from BWV 858 to excerpts from his own score.

Another important motive in *Die Meistersinger* also probably owes its genesis to similar material in the last prelude in the second volume of Bach's *WTC*, BWV 893 in B minor (Example 27a). Although there is no record of Wagner having connected this work to *Meistersinger*, he did make general comments about it as Rubinstein read through it on Sunday, 2 March 1879:

> In the evening the conclusion of the *48 Preludes and Fugues* [BWV 890-893] ... R. has the last prelude [in B minor, BWV 893] played quickly and with great passion, he finds it quite remarkable that Bach concludes in this way, says the entire sonata of the future is contained in it, and at certain passages he observes, "*Tristan und Isolde* cannot do that better."[37]

Wagner was perhaps referring to Bach's use of a simple rounded binary plan for this prelude. Or maybe he had in mind the sequential passages that exploit motives as if developing them. The oblique reference to *Tristan* seems particularly odd, given the advanced chromatic vocabulary of that work compared to Bach's prelude. It is possible that Wagner again had in mind Bach's deployment of limited motives to create a longer

[37] CTb, 272-73.

work. As obscure as that comment must remain, it is clear that Wagner does have a similar motive to the basic idea in BWV 893 in *Die Meistersinger* (Example 27b). This driving theme is first heard here in Act Two, Scene One, when Sachs berates his apprentice David for fighting or, at least, making too much sport in the street with the other apprentices. The motive will return as a major component of the "Schusterlied," which Wagner foreshadows here, later in this act and is clearly meant to depict a less placid side to Sachs's personality. The rhythmic activity certainly also gives an apt image of one toiling away as a cobbler. Wagner has essentially kept the contour of Bach's original motive and reduced it from two parts to one, much as he had done to condense and thus simplify the rhythm of BWV 858.[38]

As performance instructions to Rubinstein in December 1878, Wagner actually addressed the issue of emphasizing the melodic aspects of Bach's works in relationship to the Fugue in F-sharp Major, BWV 858:

> … Herr R. plays us three preludes and fugues; R. says of the theme of the 13th fugue that it is like the proclamation of a gospel; in general, he advises Herr Ru. not to emphasize the middle voices too strongly, so that the melody may stand out nicely.[39]

Several nights later, he admonished the pianist again:

> Bach in the evening…. He advises Rubinstein always to bring out the melodic line very clearly … He wants the ensuing fugue taken broadly, then gradually quickening. "These pieces are riddles," he says, "one must look at them, follow the melody; he has really lavished melody on them." – After this ... finally we hear *Die Msinger*, the concluding passages of the 2nd and 3rd acts. Divine

[38] There is an alternate version of BWV 893 transmitted in a manuscript copy by Bach's pupil and son-in-law Johann Christoph Altnikol (1720-1759). Rather than being marked *alla breve*, as in the autograph and in the copy made by Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721-1783), Altnikol's copy has common time with all the note values halved. Thus, Wagner's motive initially has precisely the same note values as those found in Altnikol's version. Of course, Wagner does modify this on subsequent appearances, and there is no way of determining with which manuscript tradition of Bach's work Wagner would have been more familiar.

[39] CTb, 233; entry for Thursday, 19 December 1878.

> impressions, Sachs radiating nobility, dispassionateless. I wish I could describe R.'s countenance when he is playing such things, his eyes opened wide, his gaze ranging ever farther, his brow illumined![40]

Solving "riddles" of Bach's works can be achieved by following the melody, according to the directions Wagner gave repeatedly. Clearly, he believed in the idea of *Hauptstimme* before it had to be created for atonal music, as is evidenced by his having sung the first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony to his fellow composer Felix Draeseke (1835-1913) who visited Lucerne in the summer of 1859.[41] Once again, pieces from the *WTC* led directly to excerpts from *Die Meistersinger* in the informal domestic recital in 1878.

In *Über Schauspieler und Sänger* [*On Actors and Singers*] from September 1872, Wagner describes how he believes opera developed increasingly dramatic and realistic means of expression, focusing especially on recitative. In this lengthy essay, he also rehashes many of his arguments from *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* of the previous year. His best example of what he has been able to achieve in his own works concerned the way the performers in Munich took to the new style he had cultivated in *Die Meistersinger* when the opera was first performed in 1868:

> wenn einem witzigen Freunde es dünkte, mein Orchestersatz käme ihn wie eine zur Oper gewordene unausgegesetzte Fuge vor, so wissen wiederum meine Sänger und Choristen, daß sie mit der Lösung ihrer so schwierigen musikalischen Aufgaben zur Aneigung eines fortwährenden *Dialoges* durchgedrungen waren, der ihnen endlich so leicht und natürlich fiel, wie die gemeinste Rede des Lebens … [42]
>
> [even though it seemed to a clever friend as though my orchestral setting struck him as an incessant fugue turned into an opera, just so my singers and choristers knew that with the

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[40] CTb, 236; entry for Sunday, 22 December 1878.

[41] Erich Roeder, *Felix Draeseke: Der Lebens- und Leidenswegs eines deutschen Meisters* (Dresden: Wilhelm Limpert, 1932), 106; cited in Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose*, 251.

[42] GS 9, 211.

> masterful realization of their so difficult musical tasks an ever-present *dialogue* pervaded, which finally came to them as easily and naturally as the most common conversation of life …]

That is to say that contrapuntal textures had to give way to a dialogue in which each part has to take its turn. The only way the overriding impression could seem natural is if individual lines were subsumed into a coherent whole, essentially with melody or the main dramatic idea prevailing above whatever else was occurring. As noted above, many passages of *Die Meistersinger* indeed are polyphonic, but just as in Bach's works, Wagner believed that solving the "riddles" in his music meant allowing for this give and take, much like in everyday dialogue.

It is striking to note that decades earlier in his first known published writing, "Die deutsche Oper" ["German Opera"] (dated June 1834), Wagner had already observed that Bach's fugues were genuine musical products of his epoch, a time when composers were more learned and listeners were more attuned to complicated techniques and textures than in subsequent periods. At the time of his writing in 1834, Wagner was convinced that the last of the erudite German composers had been Mozart, despite the fact that he had to express himself in Italian operatic genres. Since that time, German composer such as Spohr and Weber had provided so many details in their music in the hopes of appearing learned that they failed to produce anything as strikingly attractive musically or dramatically as contemporary Italian and French opera composers.[43] Thus, Wagner's solution to this riddle in *Die Meistersinger* continued to please him for the rest of his life.

[43] "Die deutsche Oper," in *Richard Wagner: Dichtungen und Schriften*, vol. 5, 9-12.

Bach's influence through the *WTC* is not limited to *Die Meistersinger*, as has been demonstrated previously. But unlike that work, Wagner was not overtly striving for a Bachian effect in most of his dramatic compositions. Yet his innate sense of drama and his divided loyalties to both music and words often led Wagner to describe the scenes that other pieces of music created in his mind. The example of the "Mayor" and "Mayoress" in the Fugue in D Major, BWV 850, serves as an excellent example of this, even if one cannot associate the musical style with Wagner's own works. There is another more concrete example he related to the *Ring* explicitly on Friday, 20 December 1878: "Prelude 18 [in G-sharp Minor, BWV 863,] enchants and moves one, and its fugue R. calls a fairy tale told by the grandmother in the *Edda*. The theme is expressive of complete resignation, and he sings some words to it, which end, 'And so it then must be.'"[44] The elder *Poetic Edda* (probably originally written down in the first half of thirteenth century) and the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson (1178/9-1241) were among Wagner's many sources for *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, works he first investigated in 1847 after having first studied classical tragedy.[45]

The association of the story-telling grandmother in the *Eddas* with Wagner's Norns, who also appear in the original sources, in the *Ring* is supported by the fact that both tell stories of the fates of various characters in the epics. Related to the Norns are also the Valkyries as bringers of fate, and Wagner's earliest sketches from July/August 1850 for what was then envisioned as a single opera entitled *Siegfrieds Tod* include both

[44] CTb, 235.
[45] ML, 343.

music for the Norns and the Valkyries, as well as the opening duet for Brünnhilde and Siegfried.[46] Most of this material eventually found its way into *Götterdämmerung*, with the exception of the Valkyrie scene, which was removed to the First Scene of Act Three of *Die Walküre* in the new multipart cycle. The figuration Wagner employs to accompany the Norns in the original sketches for the opening of *Siegfrieds Tod* (Example 28a) clearly is similar to what "enchants and moves one" in BWV 863 (Example 28b). As Bailey notes, Wagner actually had two attempts at making this motivic material mesh with the vocal line, without overwhelming the singers and without hampering them with a too forced manner of declamation.[47] Note also how carefully Wagner marks passages that will not have figuration ("*ohne figur*") after having merely indicated the repetitions of the figuration with repeat signs under the bass staff. In both Wagner's sketches and Bach's prelude, there is a sort of incessant aura to the rising repeated sequential figures. These are customarily followed by a balancing descent. This paradigm recurs on a larger scale several times in each work, as well. As a final similarity, the remote and unusual key Bach selected (G-sharp minor) is echoed in Wagner's choice of E-flat minor, the key he retained in the final version of this scene in *Götterdämmerung*. Thus, Wagner's choice of key seems far from arbitrary but rather seems to be an attempt at recreating an aura similar to what he perceived in Bach's work.

Further evidence of this sort of pervading aura Wagner ascribed to Bach's work comes in the Prelude and Fugue in E-flat minor, BWV 853. In *Über das Dirigiren*

[46] Bailey, "Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfrieds Tod*," 464.
[47] Bailey, "Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfrieds Tod*," 472-73.

(1869), Wagner recounts an occasion on which he had Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885) play BWV 853:

> Von einem der namhaftesten älteren Musiker und Genossen Mendelssohn's … erbat ich mir einmal den Vortrag des achten Präludiums mit Fuge aus dem ersten Theile des wohltemperirten Klaviers (Es moll), weil dieses Stück mich stets so besonders magisch angezogen hatte; ich muß gestehen, daß ich selten einen ähnlichen Schreck empfunden habe, als ihn mir die freundlichste Gewährung dieser meiner Bitte brachte. Da war denn allerdings von düsterer deutscher Gothik und all' den Alfanzereien nicht mehr die Rede; dagegen floß das Stück unter den Händen meines Freundes mit einer "griechischen Heiterkeit" über das Klavier hin, daß ich vor Harmlosigkeit nicht wußte wohin, und unwillkürlich in eine neu-hellenische Synagoge mich versetzt sah, aus deren musikalischen Kultus alles alttestamentarische Accentuiren auf das Manierlichste ausgemerzt war. Noch prickelte mir dieser sonderbare Vortrag in den Ohren, als ich endlich Liszt bat, mein musikalisches Gemüth von diesem peinlichen Eindrucke zu reinigen: er spielte mir das vierte Präludium mit Fuge (Cis moll). Nun hatte ich wohl gewußt, was mir von Liszt am Klavier zu erwarten stand; was ich jetzt kennen lernte, hatte ich aber von Bach selbst nicht erwartet, so gut ich ihn auch studirt hatte. Aber hier ersah ich eben, was alles Studium ist gegen die Offenbarung; Liszt offenbarte mir durch den Vortrag dieser einzigen Fuge Bach, so daß ich nun untrüglich weiß, woran ich mit diesem bin, von hier aus in allen Theilen ihn ermesse, und jedes Irrewerden, jeden Zweifel an ihn kräftig gläubig mir zu lösen vermag. Ich weiß aber auch, daß Jene von ihrem als Eigenthum gehüteten Bach *nichts* wissen; und wer hieran zweifelt, dem sage ich: laßt ihn euch von ihnen vorspielen![48]
>
> [Of one of the most distinguished musicians and colleagues of Mendelssohn … I once asked for a performance of the Eighth Prelude with Fugue from the First Part of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (in E-flat minor), because this piece always so especially magically attracted me. I have to admit that I have seldom experienced such a similar fright as when he in the friendliest way granted my wish. There was certainly no longer any question of the gloomy German Gothic and all that foolishness then; in its place, the piece flowed under the hands of my friend on the keyboard with a "Greek cheerfulness," so that I did not know to where its harmlessness led me, and involuntarily I found myself in a new Hellenic synagogue, from whose musical cult all the Old Testament accentuation was most politely eradicated. This odd performance still rang in my ears, until finally I begged Liszt to cleanse my musical soul of this painful impression; he played the Fourth Prelude and Fugue (in C-sharp minor) for me. Now I well knew what to expect of Liszt at the keyboard; what then met my ears I would not have expected from Bach himself, even though I had studied him so well. But here I gathered exactly what all study is compared to revelation; Liszt revealed Bach to me through the performance of this one fugue, so that I now unerringly know where I am with him, can judge him in all his parts from here on, and am able to resolve every misgiving, every doubt by believing passionately in him. However, I also know that those who guard Bach as their own possession know *nothing*, and to those who doubt it, to them I say: let them play Bach for you!]

Although Wagner had treated Hiller as a professional colleague while the latter was in Dresden and Leipzig, by the time he came to write *Über das Dirigiren* and *Mein Leben*,

[48] GS 8, 317-18. Hiller is never named in the article.

Wagner could only assume that what he reckoned were his former friend's failings as an interpreter of Bach's music were somehow due to his heritage.[49] If one can divorce one's feelings about Wagner's racism from his comments about how he envisioned Bach's prelude and fugue, it is easier to understand that what Wagner was trying to convey was what he believed to be the complete inadequacy of Hiller's Apollonian approach to such brooding and evocative music.

The single entry about the Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Minor in Cosima's diaries, dated Tuesday, 18 November 1879, also reveals more clearly what Wagner found to be the essence of these pieces:

> ... R. asks Herr Rubinstein to play him a Bach fugue. Rub. chooses the B Minor (for organ) [BWV 544], to our supreme joy. "These things are elemental forces, like planets, endowed with psychic life." "There is the musician *par excellence*," he also exclaims. — At my request he [that is, Wagner now] plays the Prelude in E-flat Minor, and afterward voices what was in my mind — how much femininity there is in these most powerful of works, so much tenderness and touching lament![50]

Again, Wagner and Cosima have ascribed a certain Gothic romanticism to Bach's music: it is powerful, yet feminine and tender. Compared with the comments about BWV 863 – that it "enchants and moves one" and "is expressive of complete resignation" – it would indeed seem that Wagner perceived a similar affect in these pieces, perhaps one that again suggested the unusual key of E-flat minor for the opening of *Siegfrieds Tod* and *Götterdämmerung*.

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[49] Many entries in Hiller's diaries attest to occasions he and Wagner worked together and enjoyed each other's company. [See Reinhold and Margarete Sietz, eds., *Der Nachlass Ferdinand Hillers* (Cologne, 1970).] In fact, Hiller had assisted in rehearsals for the premiere of *Tannhäuser* in Dresden (ML, 305).

[50] CTb, 398.

As thorough as Geck is in relating so many of these remarks from the diaries and elsewhere, he did not attempt to show any relationship between the music of Bach and Wagner in his study. Yet he provides the most comprehensive discussion of Wagner's comments about earlier composers possible at the time of his writing, especially considering the fact that Cosima's diaries had not even been published, let alone available for study, at that point. Taken individually, the foregoing examples might seem trivial or, at best, somewhat unconvincing. However, taken as a group and seen in the light of Wagner's observations both about Bach's works and his own, it would be unfortunate not to recognize the import of his discussions. Even without this ultimate step in stylistic analysis, Geck deserves credit for his catalog of Wagner's comments and was truly a pioneer in noting the irony in the fact that one of the most historically informed composers of his time was continually referred to as the creator of "music of the future," a fate to which Wagner condemned himself, of course, due to his choice of titles for many of his essays.[51]

Wagner also made many more generalized comments about Bach and his contributions to music. Wagner clearly took pride not only just in playing through these pieces for his own enjoyment with his family and Josef Rubinstein, he also recommended them as educational exemplars for his and Cosima's children as they worked on a "carnival" presentation of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at home in a specially made children's theater sent to them by Judith Mendès (née Gautier; 1845-1917):

[51] Geck, 123.

> Rehearsals of *Rheingold* with the children for the toy theater made by Judith, great exertions, morning, afternoon, and evening rehearsals with music. As a reward I am able to hear things from *Die Meistersinger* in the evening, after which R. enthusiastically shows the young musicians several Bach motets and recommends them for further study.[52]

One will recall that Wagner had conducted a Bach's motet *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* in Dresden in 1848. Also, in *"Zukunftsmusik"* in 1860, he had suggested this work as example of a Germanic composer's ability to preserve polyphony in music, while also reviving interest in melody and rhythm, while Renaissance polyphony suffered a concurrent decline in Italy. Bach's motet probably served as a source of inspiration for passages in *Tannhäuser* and *Meistersinger*, and at the time of this anecdote Wagner was busy at work on *Parsifal*, another work rich in choral writing. Thus, it was as if he were showing off his own works to the children by proxy on this occasion.

This autobiographical identification with Bach's music could not have been made more clear than in several of Wagner's comments in November 1878:

> In the evening he plays the piano for a while, his songs "*Stehe still*" [1857-58] and "*Der Tannenbaum*" [1838], and "*Albumblatt für Betty Schott*" [1875], and a Bach prelude. "I like Bach better than myself," he says with a laugh. "This music one really can call sublime! It always reminds me of old cathedrals, it is like the voice of the thing-in-itself; in comparison, the sensitive and sentimental seem trivial; in Beeth[oven] everything is dramatic. I sometimes feel I don't want to hear anything more by Beeth. — I know the five sonatas. But Bach I should like to be able to play for myself."[53]

> After supper he again talks about Bach, saying, "In him you find all the seeds which later flourished in so fertile a soil as Beethoven's imagination; much of what Bach wrote down was done unconsciously, as if in a dream; my 'unending melody' is predestined in it." He wishes he could play the piano well enough to perform Bach for himself.[54]

Hearing a couple of his older works alongside a Bach prelude, Wagner declares he prefers his predecessor's music, even to Beethoven. Bach is even admirable enough to

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[52] CTa, 946; entry for Monday, 12 February 1877.
[53] CTb, 197-98; entry for Monday, 11 November 1878.
[54] CTb, 200; entry for Wednesday, 13 November 1878.

make Wagner wish he could play the piano better, because the Baroque master's style is truly fundamental, "done unconsciously" and "like the voice of the thing-in-itself." Although Beethoven subsequently cultivated this style, he also robbed it of some of its wholesomeness. Wagner's concept of "unendliche Melodie" (also explored in "*Zukunftsmusik*") allowed for the emancipation of melody from the textual constraints of rhyme, metrics, and repetition. Suffice it to say that Wagner recognized a similar trait in the perpetual motion of Bach's music.[55]

Another aspect of Bach's music that attracted Wagner was the regular repetition of motivic material, as he noted on Friday, 31 January 1879: "… we take up Bach's *Preludes and Fugues* again, after a long break … After one of the fugues he says, 'Canonic devices — they are repeated, too, so people should be able to put up with the repetitions of my *Leitmotive.*'"[56] Comparing Bach's compact miniatures – for even the largest-scale of his imitative works must remain slight compared to works on the Wagnerian scale – with Wagner's smallest fully discrete constructs, the individual acts in his music dramas, might seem absurd, but several studies have likened Wagnerian scenes to ritornello form, in many respects a less polyphonically animated version of fugal procedures. As Anthony Newcomb points out in the most thorough discussion of Wagnerian ritornello form, leitmotivic material and form often do not coincide in Wagner's works, even though they may interact and may even be aligned at certain

[55] Wagner made a less direct comment about "unendliche Melodie" on Thursday, 20 February 1879: "In the evening three Bach preludes and fugues from the second book [BWV 883-885], very well played by Herr R. Of the first and most beautiful (in F-sharp Minor, No. 14 [BWV 883]) R. says, 'That is like Nature, uncomprehending and incomprehensible, and it is also unending melody!'" (CTb, 270.)

[56] CTb, 263.

times.[57] Admittedly, canonic or fugal entries in Bach's music do indeed determine form in predictable ways that Wagner's motivic material often does not. Newcomb takes the opportunity to engage in a modicum of speculation about what Wagner's sources of inspiration might have been, noting especially his fondness for Bach.[58] Overlooking imitative works, despite the fact that Wagner was clearly fascinated with them and how they are put together and repeatedly played and commented about them, Newcomb wonders if Wagner may have come to know Bach's repetitive forms through exposure to his instrumental works that employ ritornello form instead.[59] Even though ritornello and fugal procedures indeed do share some common traits, the foregoing evidence contradicts this tentative theory and gives precedence to works such as the preludes and fugues in the *WTC* instead. Recall that Wagner had known the *WTC* for some time, at least since his teens as noted previously, meaning there is little need to demonstrate possible links to other works by Bach, even though these too could prove informative. There can be no doubt that the pieces in the *WTC* did guide his impressions about Bach's style from early on in his artistic development.

Even if it were not for his discussions of individual pieces, Wagner often made his priorities amongst Bach's works well known to Cosima and their circle of friends:

> A chorale by J.S. Bach, sent by Herr Levi, astonishes us with the boldness of its modulations, but R. does not quite trust the "*many* beauties," for Bach "was after all a cantor and was writing all day long. The *48 Preludes and Fugues* and the motets — those are the pearls."[60]

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[57] Anthony Newcomb, "Ritornello Ritornato: A Variety of Wagnerian Refrain Form," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, California Studies in 19th Century Music, ed. Joseph Kerman, no. 6 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 202.

[58] Newcomb, 218.

[59] Newcomb, 220-21.

[60] CTb, 158; entry for Saturday, 28 September 1878.

Hermann Levi (1839-1900) was selected personally by Wagner to conduct the premiere of *Parsifal* in Bayreuth in 1882. Levi was also well known for his interpretations of the music of Brahms, himself an admirer of the music of Bach. Although it is not known which harmonically interesting chorale Levi sent to Wagner, it is entirely possible that Brahms might have initially rediscovered this gem himself. One will recall that Wagner said he preferred the original versions of chorales even to harmonizations by Bach: "He finds the modernization of old German songs distasteful."[61] Certainly, as Levi became part of his circle towards the end of Wagner's life, he would have been exposed to Wagner's comments about Bach's works, much as Rubinstein had been.

Wagner went to great ends to lavish praise on both Bach's music in general and the *WTC* on many other occasions. It is not unusual to read entries in Cosima's diary such as:

> To conclude the evening he [Wagner] takes out Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues* and plays several of them. "That is music," he exclaims after one of the preludes, "music *eo ipso*." — "He is totally unique," he exclaims after another ... R. considers the *48 Preludes and Fugues* to be the quintessence of Bach.[62]

Wagner's Latin summation is both canonic and philosophical and again points to the high stature the *WTC* occupied in his musical pantheon. Wagner used another erudite simile to describe Bach's music on a different occasion: "Herr Rub. then plays us some fugues from the *48 Preludes and Fugues*: 'They are like the roots of words,' R. says, and later, 'In relation to other music it is like Sanskrit to other languages.'"[63] At least, Wagner allowed for an expanse of other music Bach had influenced. Not too long after this instance, Cosima notes: "In the evening Rub. plays to us [Bach's] 'Chromatic Fantasy [BWV 903],' to R.'s infinite delight. 'How can one talk of progress?' he exclaims, and

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[61] CTb, 123; entry for Saturday, 27 July 1878. (See also above.)
[62] CTb, 227; entry for Saturday, 14 December 1878.
[63] CTb, 498; entry for Saturday, 26 June 1880.

explains to us how since that time forms have become trivial rather than otherwise."[64] By forms, one assumes Wagner meant the forms (genres and styles) "*music historically developed*," as he put it in *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* (as opposed to musical form in a strict sense). Of course, Wagner was careful to allow for his own place in this "progress":

> On the trip out R. mentioned Bach's fugues — "In these, chaos is turned into harmony" — he finds all other forms trivial in comparison, and yesterday he expressed his regret that music is so much the slave of its time, except perhaps only in its use of drama.[65]

The idea of chaos becoming something reflects the same sort of creative impulse Wagner recounted several times in *Mein Leben* and elsewhere. The chaos in Bach's fugal music is none other than the thematic material itself, sometimes layered on itself, sometimes developed motivically, sometimes contrasted with countersubjects and/or new themes. The possibilities are endless and it requires an amount of control, artifice, or art to manage the material and bring it together into a cohesive whole ("harmony").

[64] CTb, 651; entry for 4 April 1881.

[65] CTb, 996; entry for Tuesday, 23 January 1883. Wagner, who was in Venice at that time, died on 13 February 1883, less than a month after making this observation.

CHAPTER 6

OPERA AS RENAISSANCE

Wagner obviously considered Bach to be the culmination of an era. As noted previously, Wagner had to readjust his hypothesis for what had brought on the change in music between the Renaissance and Baroque Era. Now, with the obviously increased importance of Bach and his polyphonic works in Wagner's mind, especially as he worked on *Die Meistersinger*, he again had to reevaluate his thinking to accommodate for what he had previously termed "the contrapuntal house of cards" in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* in 1849. In fact, for Wagner, there were essentially two great eras in the history of European art, as he finally was able to elucidate in *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (1867):

> Zwei charakteristische Hauptstadien der europäischen Kunst liegen vor: die Geburt der Kunst bei den Griechen, und ihre Wiedergeburt bei den modernen Völkern. Die Wiedergeburt wird sich nicht bis zum Ideal vollkommen abschließen, ehe sie nicht an dem Ausgangspunkte der Geburt wieder angekommen ist. Die Wiedergeburt lebte an den wiedergefundenen, studirten und nachgeahmten Werken der griechischen Kunst auf, und diese konnte nur die bildene Kunst sein; zur wahrhaft schöpferischen Kraft der antiken Kunst kann sie nur dadurch gelangen, daß sie wieder an den Quell vordringt, aus welchem jene diese Kraft schöpfte…. Die Italiener, bei welchem die wiedergeborene Kunst ihrer Ausgang nahm und ihre höchste moderne Blüthe erreichte, fanden das Drama der christlichen Kirche nicht; aber sie erfanden die christliche Musik. Diese Kunst, so neu wie das Aischyleische Drama für die Griechen, trat in die gleiche Wechselbeziehung zur italienischen bildenen Kunst (daher vorzüglich Malerei), wie das Theater zur griechischen bildenen Kunst (daher vorzüglich Plastik). Der Versuch, durch die Musik zur Rekonstruktion des antiken Drama's zu gelangen, führte zur Oper: ein verunglückter Versuch, welcher den Verfall der italienischen Musik, sowie der italienischen bildene Kunst nach sich zog. Aus dem eigentlichen Volksgeiste ward dagegen das Drama neu geboren.[1]
>
> [Two characteristic main stages of European art exist: the birth of art with the Greeks and its rebirth with modern peoples. The rebirth will never attain the complete ideal, until it arrives at the point of departure of the birth. The rebirth thrived on Greek works of art that had been

[1] GS 8, 64-5.

> rediscovered, studied, and imitated, and these could only be the plastic arts; it (the rebirth) could only succeed by this means to attain the actual creative power of antique art by forging ahead again to the source from which that very power was created…. The Italians, amongst whom reborn art took its point of departure and attained its highest modern blossom, did not find the drama of the Christian church; but they did invent Christian music. This art, as new as Aeschylean drama was for the Greeks, entered into the same correlation to Italian plastic art (especially painting) as theater to Greek plastic art (especially sculpture). The attempt to reconstruct through music ancient drama led to opera: a failed attempt, which entailed the decline of Italian music as well as Italian plastic art. On the other hand, drama was newly born from the genuine spirit of the people.]

Unlike his previous summaries of the early phases in the development of opera, Wagner seems to have finally learned of the late-Renaissance/early-Baroque desire "to reconstruct through music ancient drama," although he termed this a failure. He concludes this discussion by noting that the Germans were the ones who succeeded where the Italians had failed.[2] Wagner was, of course, incorrect in stating that the Italians "did not find [hit upon] the drama of the Christian church," even though "they did invent Christian music." Evidently, he knew little of the early history of the oratorio/passion and still ascribed that tradition to Germanic composers.

Wagner's need to separate the non-operatic Bach from subsequent generations was clearly a nationalistic ploy and one that would aid him in demonstrating his own Wagnerian Renaissance of ancient drama as a reunification of the arts. That is why he could make statements in private that clearly were not in line with contemporary understanding of history:

> In the evening Herr R. plays to us Bach's B Minor Organ Fugue, the Prelude to which delights R. … Then regarding Bach, he says to me, "He was the culmination of the medieval world — Wolfram [von Eschenbach], the mystics, A. Dürer, Luther; after that a completely new world begins, the world of the sonata, the aria, which has also produced some fine things."[3]

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[2] GS 8, 65.

[3] CTb, 276; entry for Tuesday, 11 March 1879.

Wagner certainly had read enough general and music history – and even had sufficient scholarly sources in his own library – to know that there was a commonly recognized Renaissance after the Middle Ages. Yet claiming Bach as the successor to other great German artists and thinkers made a stronger point for the dissolution of music after his time, even as it was trying to revive ancient drama. Wagner even extended the argument away from the Italians further in another observation:

> ... a six-part fugue and the "Chromatic Fantasy" by Bach, kindly played by Herr Rub. at my request. Great delight in it; R. says Bach still belongs to the Reformation, to Luther, rounding that period off; then came something quite different, which could be equated with Goethe and Schiller, etc.[4]

One should note also that in the 1867 formulation, although opera was a failure, drama was reborn "from the genuine spirit of the people." Of course, in "*Zukunftsmusik*" in 1860, he maintained that aria was derived from ancient dance, a dangerous observation for one who wished to co-opt the Renaissance for his own. Recall that his caveat was that divorcing them from their original texts and meanings and supplying a new libretto with no relation to the original had perverted both ancient rhythms and folksong. By retaining the passion/oratorio tradition for Germans, Wagner was again rehashing one of his oldest historiographic arguments, first made in "De la musique allemande" ["On German Music"; reprinted as "Über deutsches Musikwesen"] from 1840, that German vocal music attained its perfection in the Protestant church, while leaving opera to the Italians. Germans preferred simple chorales, sung by the whole congregation. Wagner goes on to note

[4] CTb, 281-82; entry for Sunday, 23 March 1879.

> In Wahrheit trägt auch die künstlerische Konstruktion des Chorals ganz den Charakter deutscher Kunst; die Neigung des Volkes zum Liede findet man in den kurzen und populären Melodien des Chorals beurkundet, von denen manche auffallende Ähnlichkeit mit anderen profanen, aber immer kindlich frommen Volksliedern haben. Die reichen und kräftigen Harmonien aber, welche die Deutschen ihren Choralmelodien unterlegen, bezeugen den tiefen künstlerischen Sinn der Nation…. Als nächste Erweiterung und Vergrößerung des Chorales müssen wir die *Motteten* angesehen werden…. Die großartigsten Komponsitionen von diesem Genre besitzen wir von *Sebastian Bach*, sowie dieser überhaupt als der größte protestantische Kirchen-Komponist betrachten werden muß.
>
> … Noch erweitert und vergrößert finden wir aber diesen Genre in den großen Passionsmusiken und Oratorien. Die Passionsmusik, fast ausschließlich dem großen Sebastian Bach eigen …[5]
>
> [In truth the artistic design of the chorale even bears the entire character of German art; one finds the affection of the people for the Lied legitimized in the short and popular melodies of the chorale, which have many striking similarities with profane yet always innocently pious folksongs. However, the rich and strong harmonies with which Germans underlay their chorale melodies attest to the deep artistic mind of the nation…. We must regard *motets* as the next expansion and enlargement of the chorale…. We possess the greatest compositions of this genre from *Sebastian Bach*, so that we must really consider him to be the greatest protestant church-music composer.
>
> … We find this genre further expanded and enlarged in great passions and oratorios. The passion, almost exclusively characteristic of the great Sebastian Bach …]

Wagner praises Bach for his careful and nuanced setting of text, as well, something that was not of any concern in Italian opera as far as Wagner could see, as he intimates time and time again and especially at great length in *Oper und Drama*. As Germans developed participatory passions with chorales, there was no need to develop opera, except as a courtly phenomenon, aping the Italians. Thus, Wagner kept Bach and his style safely away from operatic genres.

Elsewhere, Wagner was able to reunite Bach as the inheritor of the polyphonic arts with his greatest predecessors, such as Palestrina. – It was no coincidence that Wagner had programmed their works together in Dresden in 1848! – He maintained in *"Zukunftsmusik"* Italian opera had not succeeded in regaining any of the glories of ancient drama because composers were writing for virtuoso singers.

[5] GS 1, 158-59.

> Die italienischen Oper wurde so zu einem Kunstgenre ganz für sich, das, wie es mit dem wahren Drama Nichts zu thun hatte, auch der Musik eigentlich fremd blieb; denn von dem Aufkommen der Oper in Italien datirt für den Kunstkenner zugleich der Verfall der italienischen Musik; eine Behauptung, die Demjenigen einleuchten wird, der sich einen vollen Begriff von der Erhabenheit, dem Reichtum und der unaussprechlich ausdrucksvollen Tiefe der italienischen Kirchenmusik der früheren Jahrhunderte verschafft hat, und z. B. nach einer Anhörung des "*Stabat mater*" von Palestrina unmöglich die Meinung aufrecht erhalten können wird, daß die italienischen Oper eine legitime Tochter dieser wundervollen Mutter sei.[6]
>
> [Italian opera thus became an artistic genre completely by itself, one that, just as it had nothing to do with true drama, also actually remained foreign to music, for from the rise of opera in Italy dates the simultaneous fall of Italian music for the connoisseur of the arts – an assertion that will be evident to anyone who has obtained a full concept of the sublimity, riches, and unspeakably expressive depths of Italian church music of previous centuries. For example, after hearing Palestrina's "*Stabat mater*," it would be impossible honestly to maintain the opinion that Italian opera is a legitimate daughter of this wonderful mother.]

Taken with the previous comments, which admittedly do show changes in thinking, it seems that there were two paths towards opera for Wagner, the aberrant Italian path, which he deemed a failure, and the path he had taken.

Perhaps by some amount of sheer luck, by the mid-1860s and on into the 1870s, Wagner finally was able to claim the true Renaissance of ancient tragedy for himself, simply because he could disallow the Italians from having succeeded in the endeavor. It remains unclear when he learned of the details of the earliest operatic works, but if he had hinted at this knowledge in 1867 for the first time, Wagner came right out and discussed it in enough detail in 1871 in *Über die Bestimmung der Oper* as to erase all doubts that he had made at least a cursory investigation into the facts by this time:

> Eine verständig ausgeführte Geschichte des theatralischen "Pathos" würde es uns deutlich machen, worauf es bei der idealen Richtung des modernen Drama's von jeher abgesehen war. Hier würde es nun lehrreich sein, zu beachten, wie die Italiener, welche für alle ihre Kunsttendenzen zunächst bei der Antike in die Schule gingen, das rezitirte Drama fast gänzlich unentwickelt ließen, dagegen sofort die Rekonstruktion des antiken Drama's auf dem Boden der musikalischen Lyrik versuchten, und somit auf diesem Wege in immer einseitigerer Abirrung die Oper produzirten.[7]

[6] GS 7, 90.
[7] GS 9, 135.

> [A wise, explicative history of theatrical "pathos" would make clear to us at what idealistic trend modern drama was ever aimed. Here it would now be instructive to observe how the Italians, who first studied antiquity for all their (the Italians') artistic tendencies, left spoken drama almost completely undeveloped; instead, they right away attempted a reconstruction of ancient drama on the basis of musical lyric, and consequently on the way, in an ever more one-sided aberration, produced opera.]

Now opera is an "aberration" based on a possibly willful misreading of the place of music in the ancient world, one the Italians were bound to make, as they were so dependent on the ancients for all their artistic trends, according to Wagner. The Italians ignored spoken drama in favor of the development of opera, which Wagner notes again was originally the product of courtly entertainment.

Wagner continued his observations concerning "the *forms music historically developed*" quoted at length previously with a measure of detail that showed he understood how the earliest experimenters with opera had transferred features of ancient drama to their new art form:

> Als die Form der Musik haben wir zweifellos die *Melodie* zu verstehen; die besondere Ausbildung dieser erfüllt die Geschichte unserer Musik, wie ihr Bedürfniß die Ausbildung des von den Italienern versuchten lyrischen Drama's zur "Oper" entschied. Sollte hierbei zunächst die Form der griechischen Tragödie nachgebildet werden, so schien diese auf den ersten Blick sich in zwei Haupttheile zu zersetzen, in den Chorgesang und in die periodisch zur Melopoë sich steigernde dramatische Rezitation: das eigentliche "Drama" war somit dem Rezitativ übergeben, dessen erdrückende Monotonie zuletzt durch die akademisch approbirte Erfindung des "Arie" gebrochen werden sollte.[8]

> [We must doubtless take *melody* to be the form of music; the special development of it (melody) fills out the history of our music, just as its need determined the development of lyric drama attempted by the Italians as "opera." If in the process to begin with one wanted to copy the form of Greek tragedy, this appears at first glance to disintegrate into two main parts, into choral ode and into dramatic recitation that periodically rises to *melopoeia*: the actual "drama" was thus surrendered to recitative, whose crushing monotony could finally be broken by the academically approved invention of the "aria."][9]

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[8] GS 9, 146-47.

[9] *Melopoeia* may be translated as "melody making," but for Wagner doubtless the roots of the word suggested combining the act of making meaning from words (*poesis*) into creating a melody (*melos*).

Despite Wagner's intentionally ironic and condescending wording, it is clear that by this juncture he did indeed understand the bases of Italian academics' thinking that made it possible to "create" opera – rather than recreate ancient tragedy – around 1600. One almost wonders which examples of early monody and/or recitative Wagner had seen. Of course, he could just as easily be referring to works from a generation or two later, not to mention even works by Mozart.

There is one source that would seem to suggest Wagner must have known about the earliest Italian experiments that led to the creation of opera as musico-dramatic genre. Nietzsche was often a guest of the Wagners. His research into classical antiquity would naturally have brought him into contact with a wide of information about subsequent scholarship in this field. As he was working on *Die Geburt der Tragödie, oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismus* [*The Birth of Tragedy, or: Hellenism and Pessimism*] (1870-71),[10] Nietzsche sent parts of lectures and other articles to the Wagners. He also sought out discussion of his works at their home Tribschen in Switzerland. In fact, so intimate a member of Wagner's circle had Nietzsche become in the period he was working on *Die Geburt der Tragödie* that he was visiting at the time of Siegfried Wagner's birth on 6 June 1869. The scholar also spent Christmas 1870 and 1871 with the Wagners, which was also Cosima's birthday. For a birthday present in 1870, one will recall Wagner presented the "Siegfried Idyll" to his wife and had it performed by a small

[10] Originally published, with a foreword dedicated to Wagner, as *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* [*The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*] (Leipzig: F.W. Fritzsch, 1872). Nietzsche altered the title and added a new preface, "Versuch eine Selbstkritik" ["An Attempt at Self-Criticism"] in 1886, after his disillusionment with the composer.

orchestra her personally rehearsed in secret. Nietzsche gave Cosima an essay that formed part of his larger work:

> In the evening R. reads aloud passages from the manuscript Prof. Nietzsche gave me as a birthday gift; it is entitled *The Birth of the Tragic Concept* and is of the greatest value; the depth and excellence of his survey, conveyed with a very concentrated brevity, is quite remarkable; we follow his thoughts with the greatest and liveliest interest. My greatest pleasure is in seeing how R.'s ideas can be extended in this field.[11]

Even after Nietzsche's departure after the beginning of the new year, the Wagners were still enjoying his essay: "In the evening we once again discuss Prof. Nietzsche's thesis, and R. cannot praise it too highly."[12] And then again a few days later, Cosima notes another discussion about this essay:

> Talking again about E. T. A. Hoffmann, R. says he is always intrigued by the dilettantism in Germany, for to a certain extent all our greatest poets have been dilettantes, who produce sketches, in contrast to the Greeks, whose work always seems complete and assured. This leads us on to Prof. N.'s work, and R. says, "He is the only living person, apart from Constantin Frantz, who has provided me with something, a positive enrichment of my outlook."[13]

A few months later in April, Nietzsche had a draft of *Die Geburt* ready and showed it to Cosima on another visit:

> Prof. N. reads to me from a work (*The Origin and Aim of Greek Tragedy*) which he wants to dedicate to R.; great delight over that; in it one sees a gifted man imbued with R.'s ideas in his own way. We are spending these days in a lively discussion of our plans. Dr. Gruppe writes from Berlin that R. can give his lecture there on the 28th.[14]

The lecture Wagner gave in Berlin on 28 April 1871 was *Über die Bestimmung der Oper*, in which he did finally reveal enough details about the humanist endeavors that led to the

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[11] CTa, 312-13; entry for Monday, 26 December 1870. Nietzsche wrote this article in August 1870. He revised and retitled it several times before absorbing most of the information into *Die Geburt der Tragödie.*

[12] CTa, 318; entry for Tuesday, 3 January 1871.

[13] CTa, 318-19; entry for Thursday, 5 January 1871. Frantz (1817-91) was a conservative pro-pan-German political theorist.

[14] CTa, 354; entry for Wednesday, 5 April 1871.

birth of opera that it is by now unequivocally clear that he had learned enough information about this important era to discuss it more detail than in his previously published writings.

Perhaps surprisingly, Nietzsche included far more specific details and terminology – in a much shorter space! – than Wagner ever had previously. Yet one will note the echoes of Wagner's earlier writings here in Nietzsche's comments as well:

> Man kann den innersten Gehalt dieser sokratischen Cultur nicht schärfer bezeichnen, als wenn man sie *die Cultur der Oper* nennt: denn auf diesem Gebiete hat sich diese Cultur mit eigener Naivetät über ihr Wollen und Erkennen ausgesprochen, zu unserer Verwunderung, wenn wir die Genesis der Oper und die Thatsachen der Opernentwicklung mit den ewigen Wahrheiten des Apollinischen und des Dionysischen zusammenhalten. Ich erinnere zunächst an die Entstehung des stilo rappresentativo und des Recitativs. Ist es glaublich, dass diese gänzlich veräusserlichte, der Andacht unfähige Musik der Oper von einer Zeit mit schwärmerischer Gunst, gleichsam als die Wiedergeburt aller wahren Musik, empfangen und gehegt werden konnte, aus der sich soeben die unaussprechbar erhabene und heilige Musik Palestrina's erhoben hatte? Und wer möchte andrerseits nur die zerstreuungssüchtige Ueppigkeit jener Florentiner Kreise und die Eitelkeit ihrer dramatischen Sänger für die so ungestüm sich verbreitende Lust an der Oper verantwortlich machen? Dass in derselben Zeit, ja in demselben Volke neben dem Gewölbebau Palestrinischer Harmonien, an dem das gesammte christliche Mittelalter gebaut hatte, jene Leidenschaft für eine halbmusikalisch Sprechart erwachte, vermag ich mir nur aus einer im Wesen des Recitativs mitwirkenden *ausserkünstlerischen Tendenz* zu erklären.
>
> Dem Zuhörer, der das Wort unter dem Gesange deutlich vernehmen will, entspricht der Sänger dadurch, dass er mehr spricht als singt und dass er den pathetischen Wortausdruck in diesem Halbgesange verschärft: durch diese Verschärfung des Pathos erleichtert er das Verständniss des Wortes und überwindet jene übrig gebliebene Hälfte der Musik. Die eigentliche Gefahr, die ihm jetzt droht, ist die, dass er der Musik einmal zur Unzeit das Obergewicht ertheilt, wodurch sofort Pathos der Rede und Deutlichkeit des Wortes zu Grunde gehen müsste: während er andrerseits immer den Trieb zu musikalischer Entladung und zu virtuosenhafter Präsentation seiner Stimme fühlt. Hier kommt ihm der "Dichter" zu Hülfe, der ihm genug Gelegenheiten zu lyrischen Interjectionen, Wort- und Sentenzenwiederholungen u.s.w. zu bieten weiss: an welchen Stellen der Sänger jetzt in dem rein musikalischen Elemente, ohne Rücksicht auf das Wort, ausruhen kann. Dieser Wechsel affectvoll eindringlicher, doch nur halb gesungener Rede und ganz gesungener Interjection, der im Wesen des stilo rappresentativo liegt, dies rasch wechselnde Bemühen, bald auf den Begriff und die Vorstellung, bald auf den musikalischen Grund des Zuhörers zu wirken, ist etwas so gänzlich Unnatürliches und den Kunsttrieben des Dionysischen und des Apollinischen in gleicher Weise so innerlich Widersprechendes, dass man auf einen Ursprung des Recitativs zu schliessen hat, der ausserhalb aller künstlerischen Instincte liegt. Das Recitativ ist nach dieser Schilderung zu definiren als die Vermischung des epischen und des lyrischen Vortrags und zwar keinesfalls die innerlich beständige Mischung, die bei so gänzlich disparaten Dingen nicht erreicht werden konnte, sondern die äusserlichste mosaikartige Conglutination, wie etwas Derartiges im Bereich der Natur und der Erfahrung gänzlich vorbildlos ist. *Dies war aber nicht die Meinung jener Erfinder des Recitativs:* vielmehr glauben sie selbst

und mit ihnen ihr Zeitalter, dass durch jenen stilo rappresentativo das Geheimniss der antiken Musik gelöst sei, aus dem sich allein die ungeheure Wirkung eines Orpheus, Amphion, ja auch der griechischen Tragödie erklären lasse.[15]

[We can designate the innermost form of this Socratic culture most precisely when we call it *the culture of opera*, for in this area our Socratic culture, with characteristic naiveté, has expressed its wishes and perceptions – something astonishing to us if we bring the genesis of opera and the facts of the development of opera together with the eternal truths of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. First, I recall the emergence of the *stilo rappresentativo* and of recitative. Is it credible that this entirely externalized opera music, something incapable of worship, could be accepted and preserved with wildly enthusiastic favour, as if it were the rebirth of all true music, in an age in which Palestrina's inexpressibly awe-inspiring and sacred music had just arisen? On the other hand, who would make the diversion-loving voluptuousness of those Florentine circles or the vanity of its dramatic singers responsible for such a rapidly spreading love of opera? The fact that in the same age, indeed, in the same peoples, alongside the vaulted structure of Palestrina's harmonies, which the entire Christian Middle Ages had developed, there awoke that passion for a half-musical way of speaking – that I can only explain by some *tendency beyond art*, something also at work in the very nature of recitative.

To the listener who wishes to hear clearly the word under the singing, there corresponds the singer who speaks more than he sings and who intensifies the expressions of pathos in half-singing. Through this intensification of pathos he makes the words easier to understand and overpowers what's left of the musical half. The real danger now threatening him is that at an inopportune moment he may give the music the major emphasis, so that the pathos in the speech and the clarity of the words necessarily disappear. On the other hand, he always feels the urge for musical release and a virtuoso presentation of his voice. Here the "poet" comes to his assistance, the man who knows how to provide him sufficient opportunities for lyrical interjections, repetitions of words and sentences, and so on, places where the singer can now rest in a purely musical element, without considering the words. This alternation of only half-sung speech full of urgent emotion and interjections which are all singing, which lies at the heart of the *stilo rappresentativo*, this rapidly changing effort at one moment to affect the understanding and imagination of the listener and at another to work on his musical senses, is something so completely unnatural and at the same time so innerly contradictory to the Dionysian and Apollonian artistic drives that we must conclude that the origin of recitative lies outside all artistic instincts. According to this account, we should define recitative as the mixing of epic and lyric performing, but not at all in an innerly consistent blending, which could never have been attained with such entirely disparate things, but the most external conglutination, in the style of a mosaic, something the like of which has no model whatsoever in the realm of nature and experience. *But this was not the opinion of those inventors of recitative*. Rather they – along with their age – believed that through that *stilo rappresentativo* the secret of ancient music had been resolved and that only through it could one explain the tremendous effect of an Orpheus, Amphion, and, indeed, even of Greek tragedy.][16]

Just as Wagner learned from Nietzsche about the Florentine endeavors, so had Nietzsche discussed the shift from "Palestrina's harmonies, which the entire Christian Middle Ages

[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Friedrich Nietzsche Gesammelte Werke* (München: Musarion Verlag, 1920), 126-27.

[16] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Ian C. Johnston (Nanaimo, BC, Canada: Plain Label Books, 2003), 219-22.

had developed" to the "a virtuoso presentation" aided by the poet while the sense of the text thereby "necessarily disappear." Note how precisely Nietzsche describes certain facts that Wagner never discussed: centering early opera in "Florentine circles," designating the style with the correct contemporary term used by its practitioners (*stile rappresentativo*), differentiating this larger stylistic appellation from recitative proper, and mentioning rapid changes between lyrical and recitational sections in the musical fabric. Again, Wagner was no musicologist, nor even a scholar. Nietzsche was at least the latter, meaning he would have wanted to include as many facts as possible about his subject. It is obvious from the amount of detail he summarized that he did not get this information from Wagner.[17]

At any rate, Wagner had finally found a simple explanation as to why his Renaissance was the true one to his way of thinking: earlier practitioners of opera either had given primacy to the story and created monotonous music or had given free reign to the melodic aspects of music at the expense of the drama. Even "academically approved" conventions could not resolve the dichotomy this created in traditional opera, an issue Wagner had already dealt with at some length in many of his writings, not least of which was *Oper und Drama*. Nonetheless, decades later, he still found himself addressing the direction he felt opera had to take to fulfill its potential to reunify the arts and all their elements in *Über die Bestimmung der Oper*.

[17] Curiously, Reissmann does include a discussion of the early humanist experiments in music drama, giving biographical details of the prominent composers involved as well as examples of early monody, arias, and recitative (2. Bd., 3. Buch, 4. Kapitel: "Die ersten Versuche der dramatische Musik und ihr Einfluss auf die übrigen Formen," 120ff.). One wonders what Wagner made of all the examples showing the realizations of Caccini's ornaments from *Le nuove musiche* (1601; pp. 130-31).

Although Wagner knew there were contradictions in his published writings and never set out to develop any sort of systematic approach to music, he clearly believed his thoughts remained faithful to his purpose. As proof, Cosima records an occasion that is telling: "I talk a lot with R. about *Opera and Drama*, he opens the book and, reading a point in it, recognizes with pleasure the unity of his whole life and work."[18] The essential bases of his thoughts about opera had remained the same, even though there had been many shifts in his theories over the years and resultant changes in the manner in which he justified his ideas. At least by this point, the composer showed a renewed interest in the ancient Greek heritage spurred on by Nietzsche, as demonstrated by Cosima's description of their discussions while he worked on his lecture: "The significance of the orchestra, its position as the ancient chorus, its huge advantage over the latter, which talks about the action in words, whereas the orchestra conveys to us the soul of this action — all this he explains to us in detail."[19]

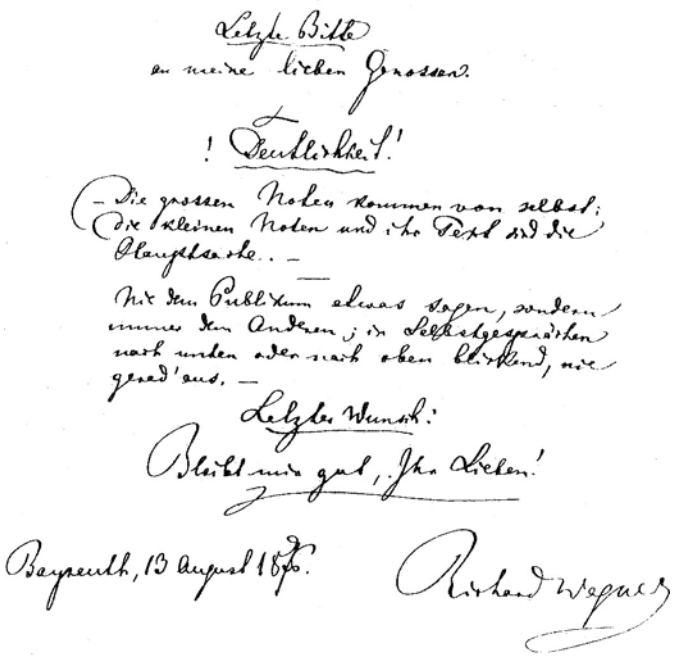
Using his own interest in history, Wagner built up his own historiography of music, in part to justify his place as the ultimate artist who could reinvigorate drama through music. Although it is paradoxical that he spent so much time discussing "The Music of the Future" while basing so many of his own ideas and compositional techniques on the styles of the past, Wagner believed he had created something new by transforming the best elements of these various styles into a new cohesive whole. His own works could only have been created as the outcome of his place in history. From

[18] CTb, 133; entry for Monday, 12 August 1878.
[19] CTa, 323; entry for Monday, 16 January 1871.

Wagner's largely theoretical ideas which were indebted to the ancient Greeks that developed out of the Zurich period to the practical applications of traits of historic music, especially reflected in his developing reverence for Palestrina and Bach, the previous discussion has demonstrated through musical examples how much Wagner was indeed indebted to his predecessors. Whereas previous scholarship has tended to ignore the many opportunities Wagner provided to examine his works in relation to those of other composers and styles, the aim of this discussion has been to demonstrate clear associations between Wagner's music and historic music.

Even with the many reevaluations and changes to in his position over the course of his creative life, whether eventually under the influence of Schopenhauer or perhaps a myriad of other ideas, Wagner continually sought to justify his works through his published writings. More personal primary sources, such as Cosima's diaries and private letters, can shed more light on this relationship between Wagner's music and that of the past. In a sense, it was because the composer educated himself so well on historical matters relating to music and his philosophy of the significance of dramatic music that he was able to create something new. As revolutionary as his ideas and compositions initially must have seemed and still seem today in many respects, it is only through understanding Wagner's own concepts of history and his place in its broad arch that one truly can appreciate his accomplishments.

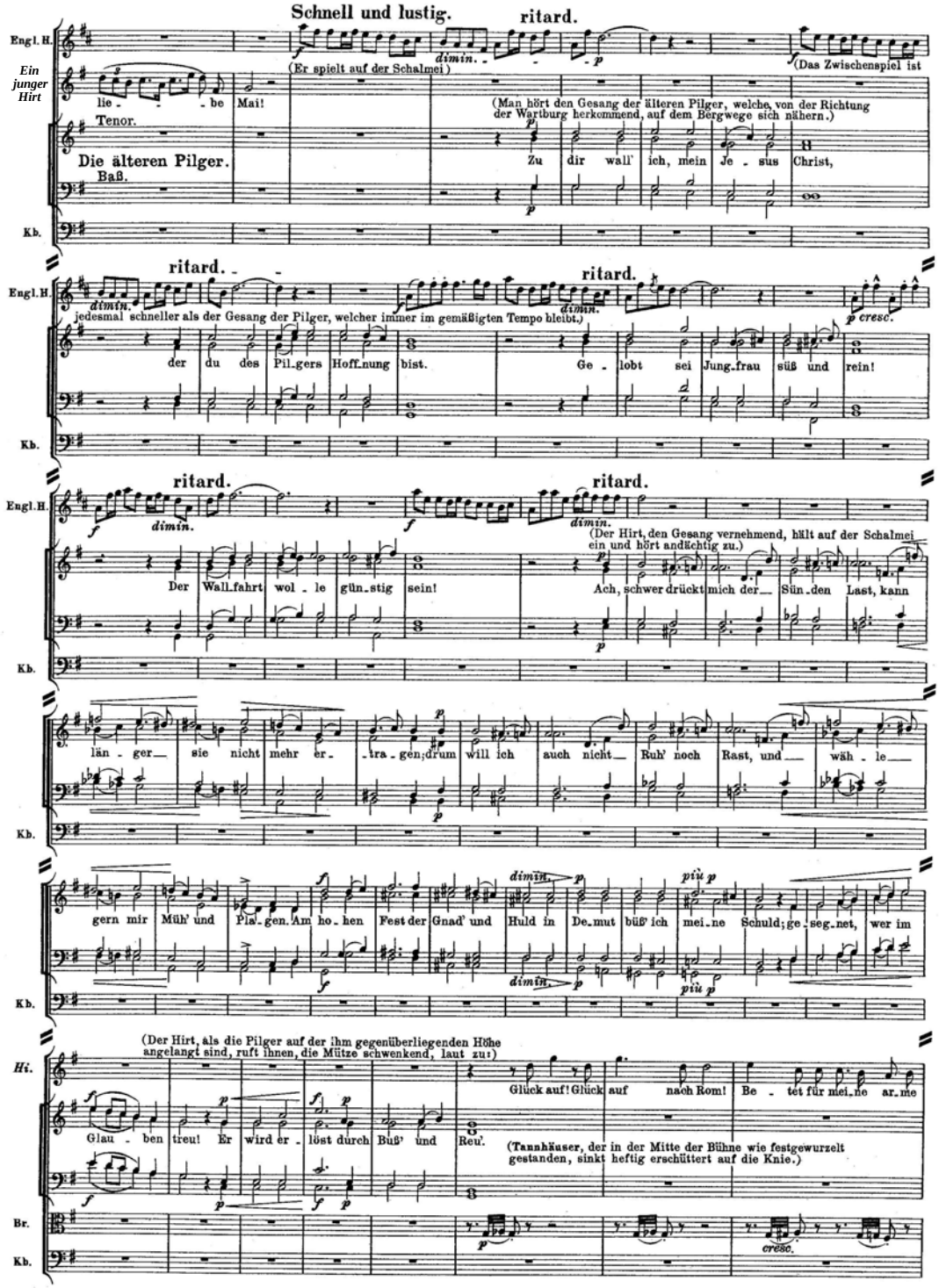
Example 1. “Letzte Bitte an meine lieben Genossen. Letzter Wunsch (Zum ersten Festspiel)” [“Last Request to My Dear Colleagues. Last Wish (for the First Festival)”].[1]


Letzte Bitte
an meine lieben Genossen.
! Deutlichkeit !
— Die grossen Noten kommen von selbst; die kleinen Noten und ihr Text sind die Hauptsache. Nie dem Publikum etwas sagen, sondern immer dem Anderen; in Selbstgesprächen nach unten oder nach oben blickend, nie gerad’ aus. —
Letzter Wunsch:
Bleibt mir gut, ihr Lieben!
Bayreuth, 13 August 1876. Richard Wagner

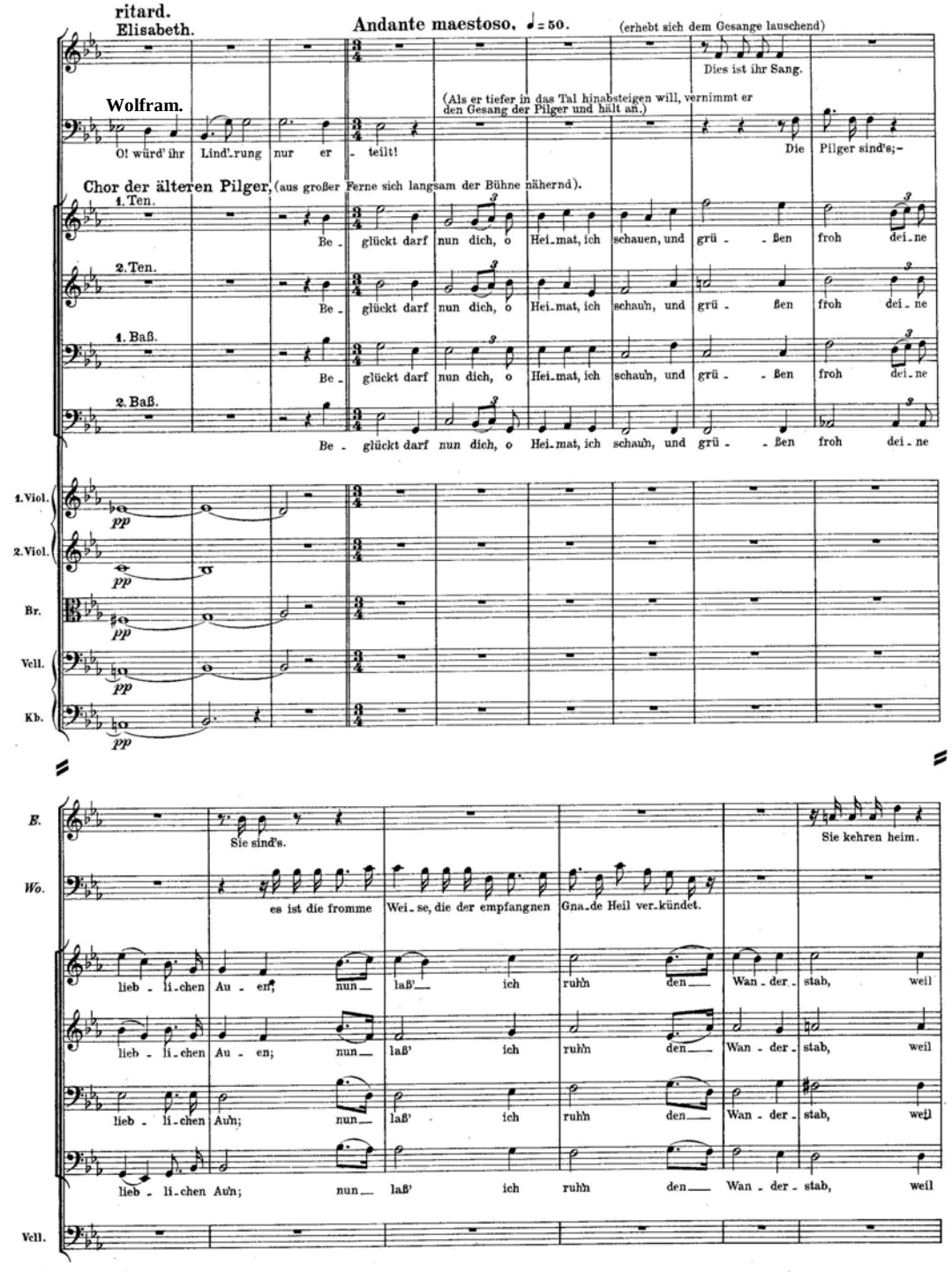
[Last Request
to my dear colleagues.
! Clarity !
— The big notes will take care of themselves; the little notes and their text are the main things. Don’t address the audience, but always each other instead; in monologues look down or look up, never straight out in front of you. —
Last Wish:
Be good to me, you dears!]

[1] Reproduced from *The Wagner Compendium*, illustration 30, facing p. 217. (Original: Nationalarchiv der Richard-Wagner-Stiftung, Richard-Wagner-Gedenkstätte, Bayreuth)

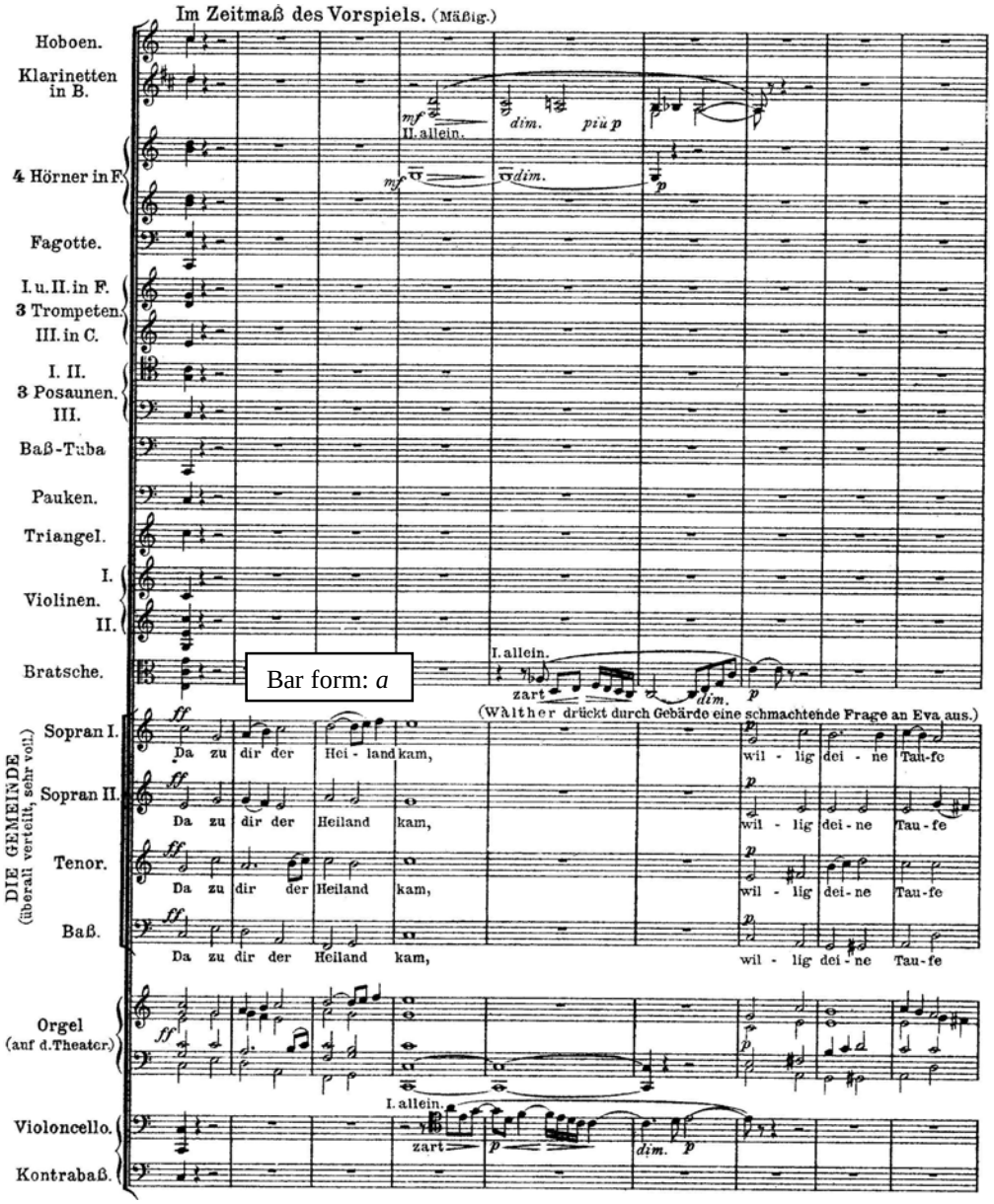
Example 2. *Tannhäuser,* Act One, Scene Three: Rhythmic and tempo contrasts between the shepherd's music and that of the pilgrims. Note the longer note values and rhythmically neutral style in the pilgrims' music.



Example 3. *Tannhäuser,* Act Three, Scene One: Rhythmic contrast between the pilgrims' chorus and the *parlando* style for Elisabeth and Wolfram. Note the predictable rhythm of the pilgrims' music in contrast to the declamatory writing for the soloists.



Example 4. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,* Act One, Scene One: Chorale style contrasted with pantomime in the orchestra. Note the neutral rhythm in the vocal parts versus the increasingly animated rhythms in the orchestra, representing Eva and Walther. Wagner suggests Bar form (*a a b*) in this section, typical of a chorale.



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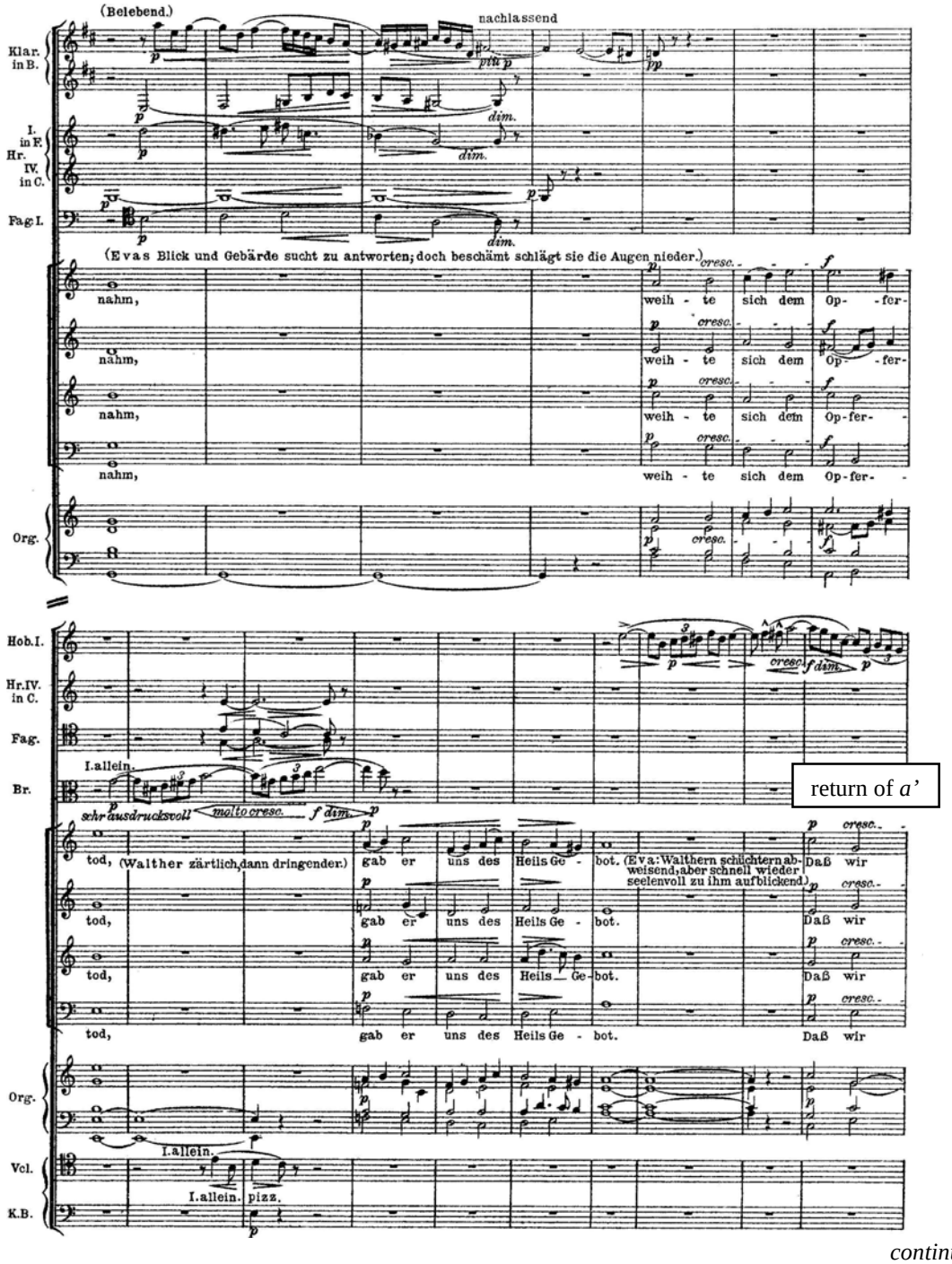
Example 4. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene One (continued).



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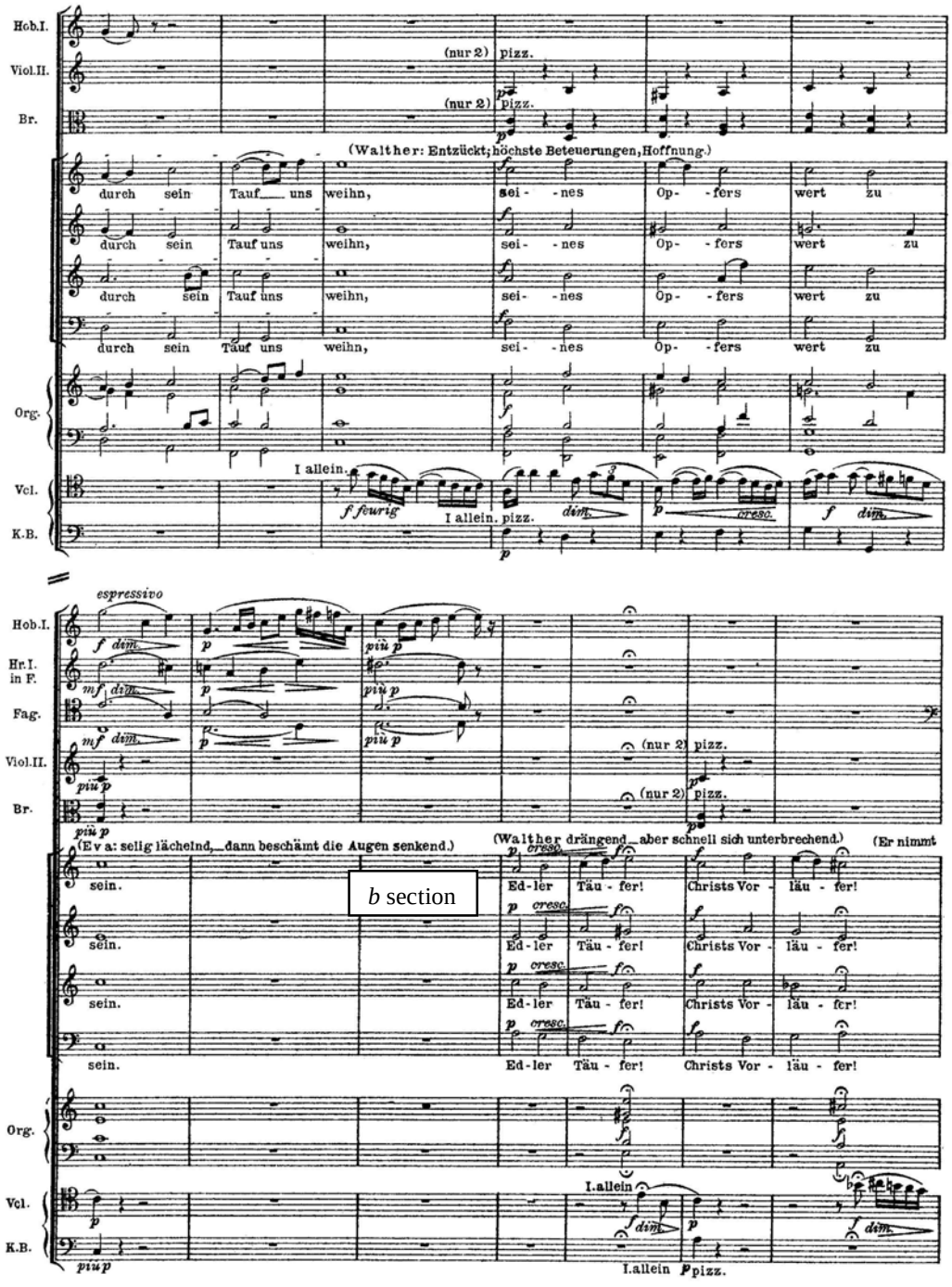
Example 4. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene One (continued).



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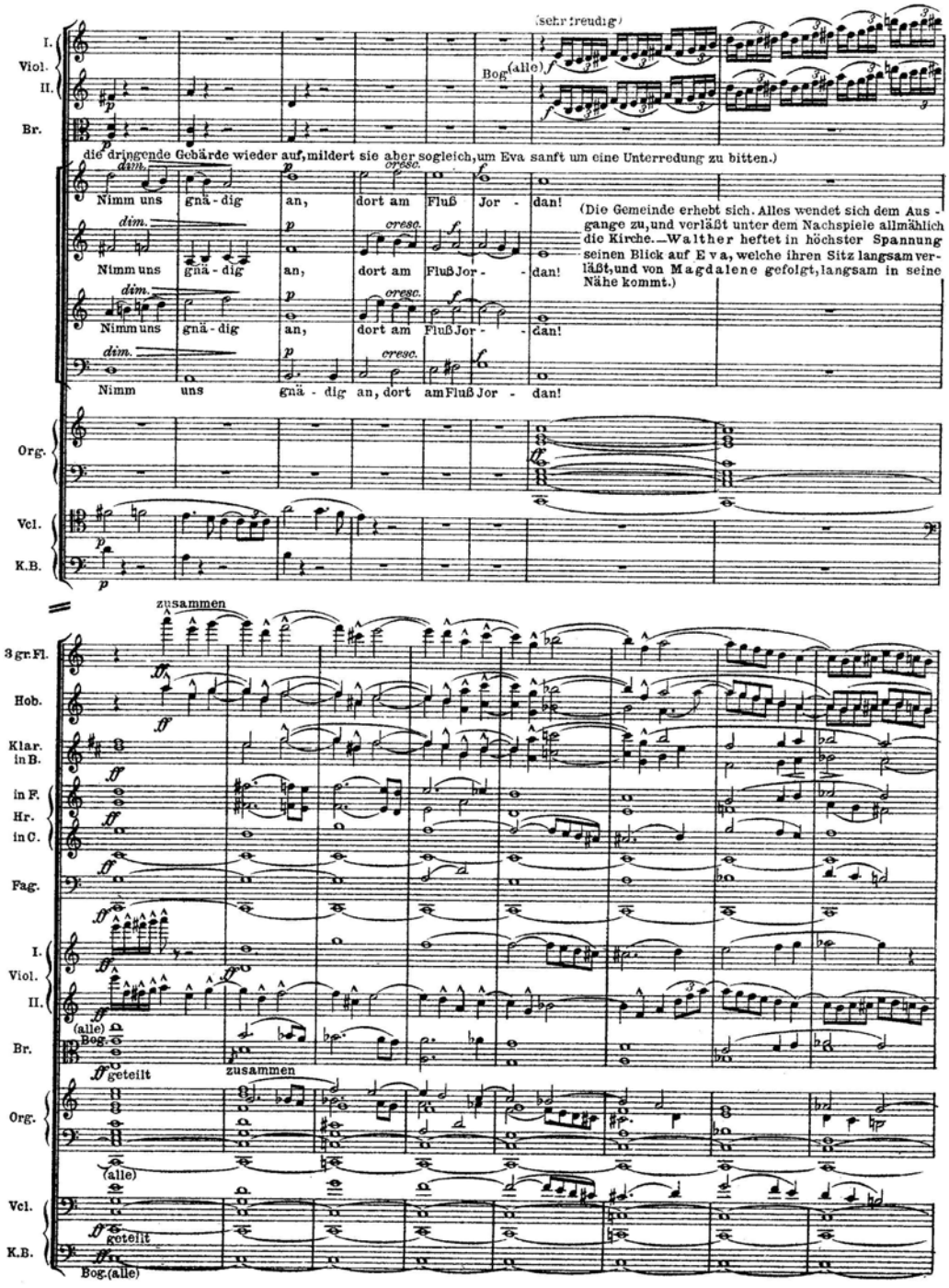
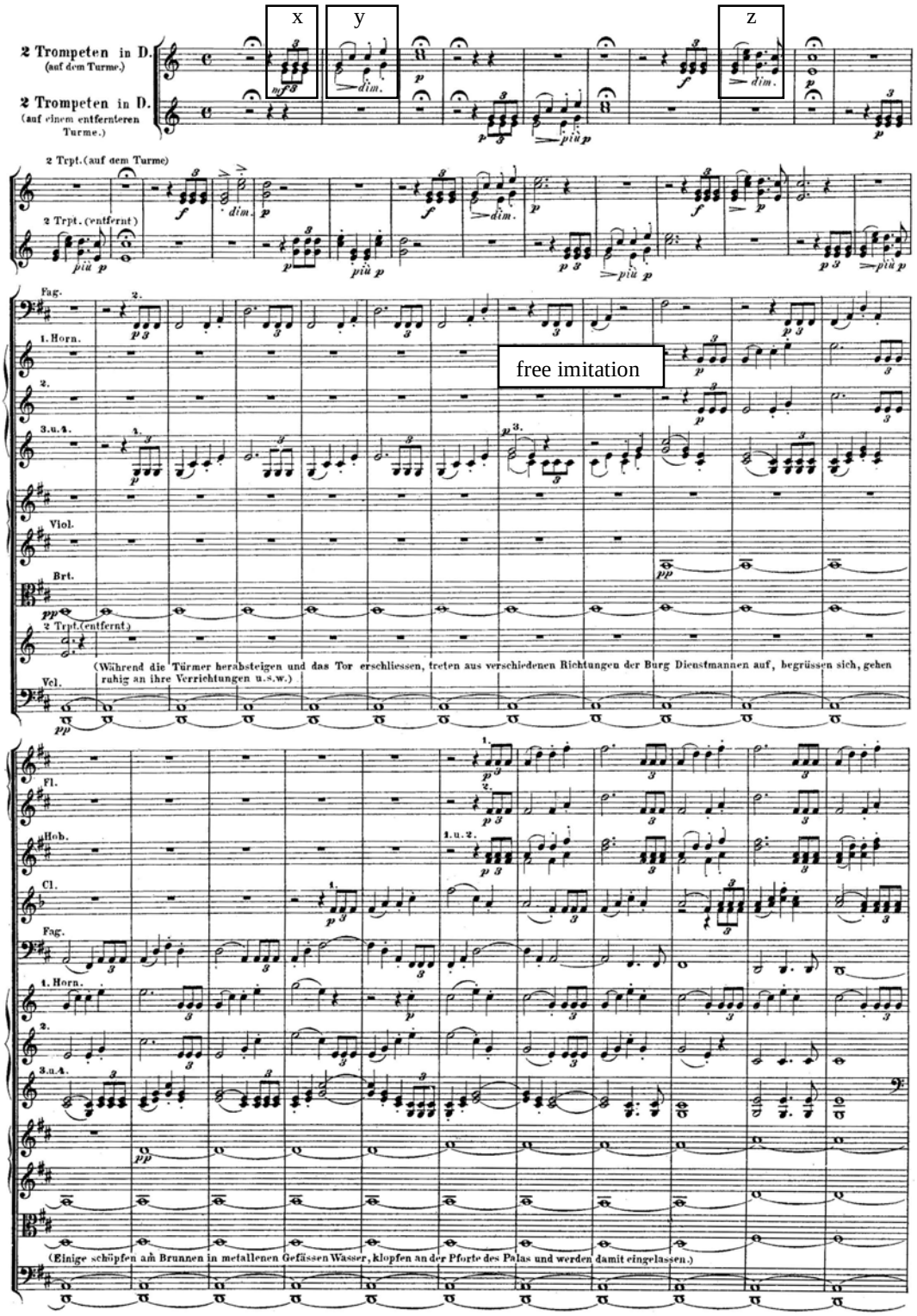
Example 4. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene One (continued).



Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three: "I wanted in fact to show how a folk song evolves": Wagner develops the trumpet fanfare in various ways to accompany stage action until it becomes the basis of a chorus.



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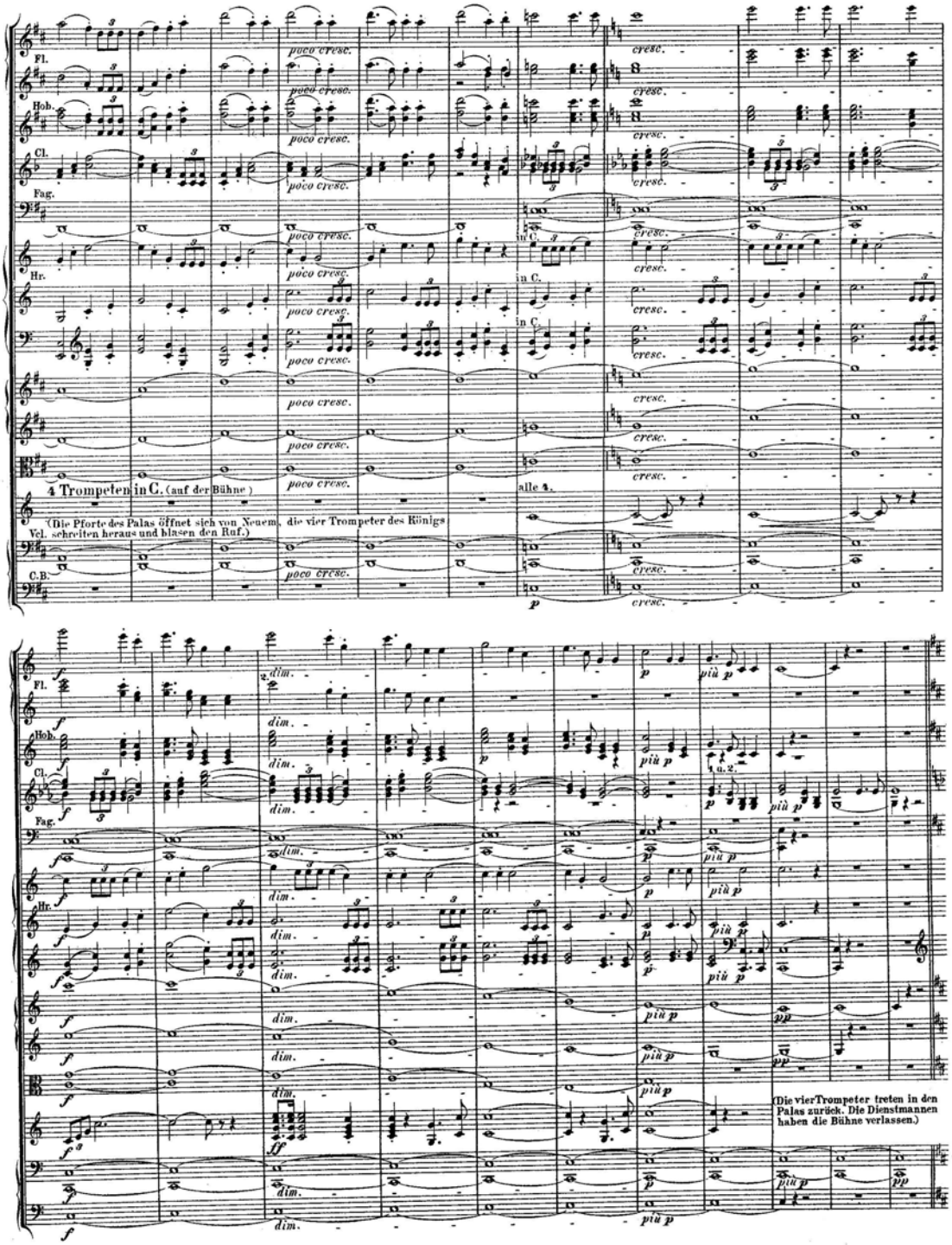
Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three (continued).



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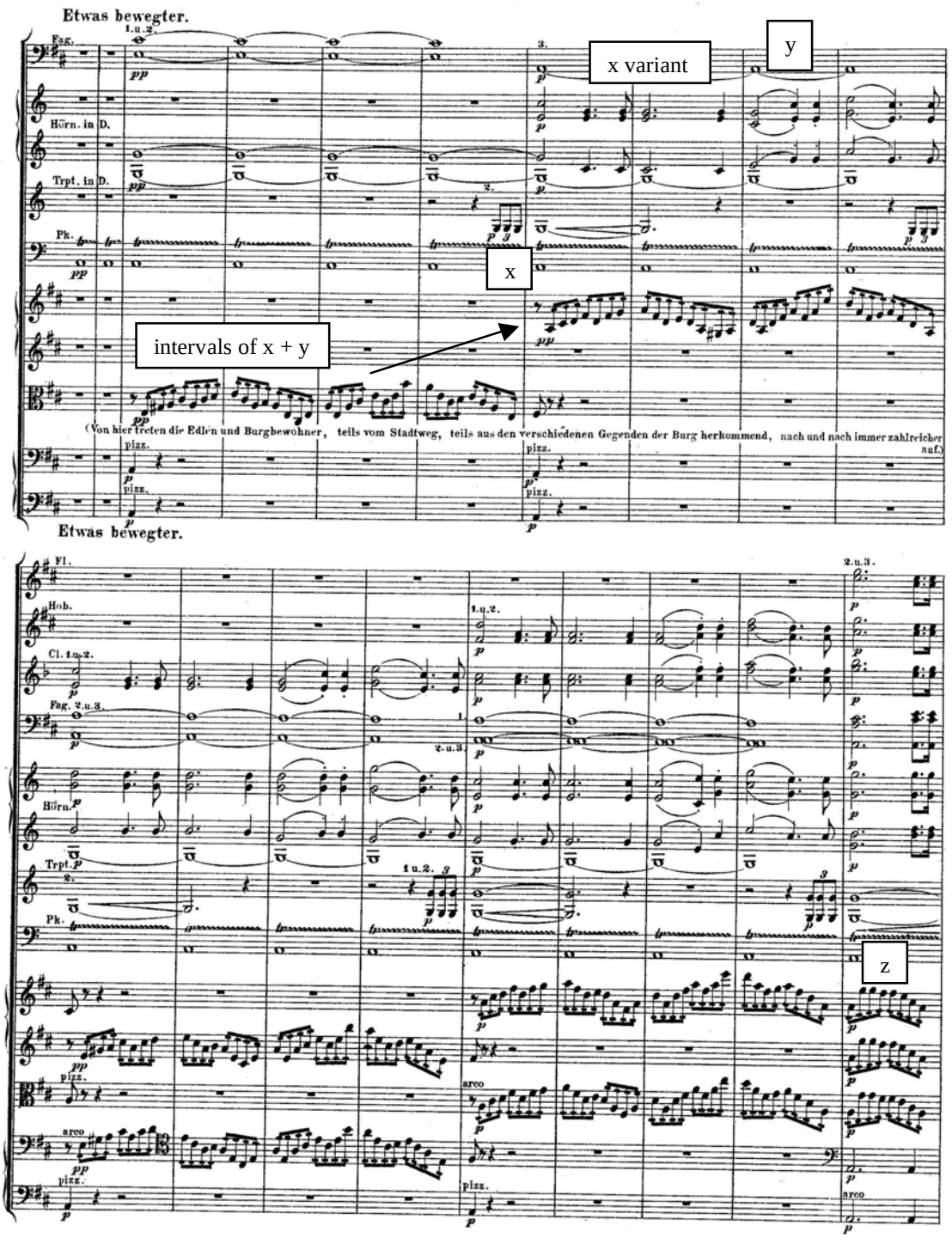
Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three (continued).



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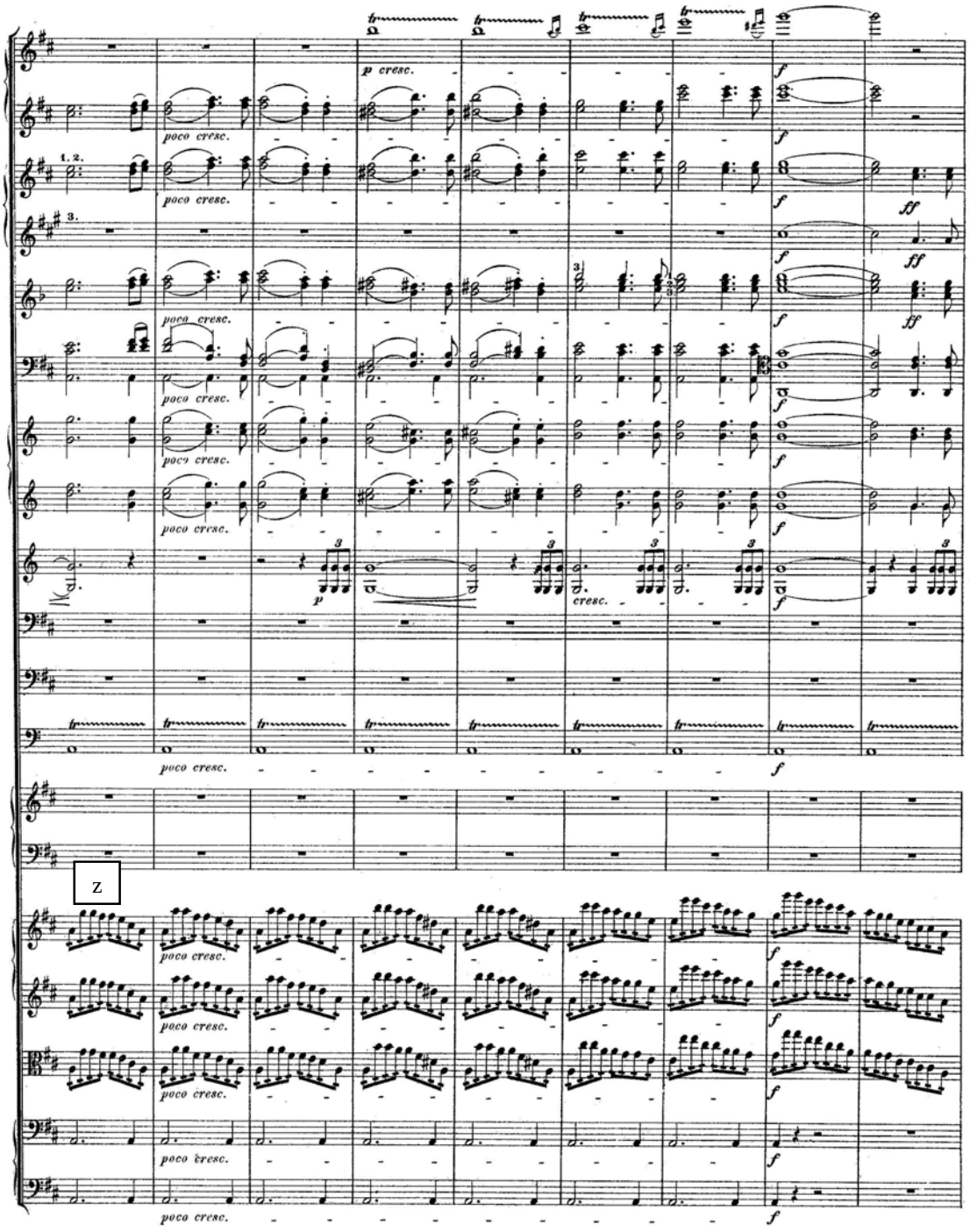
Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three (continued).



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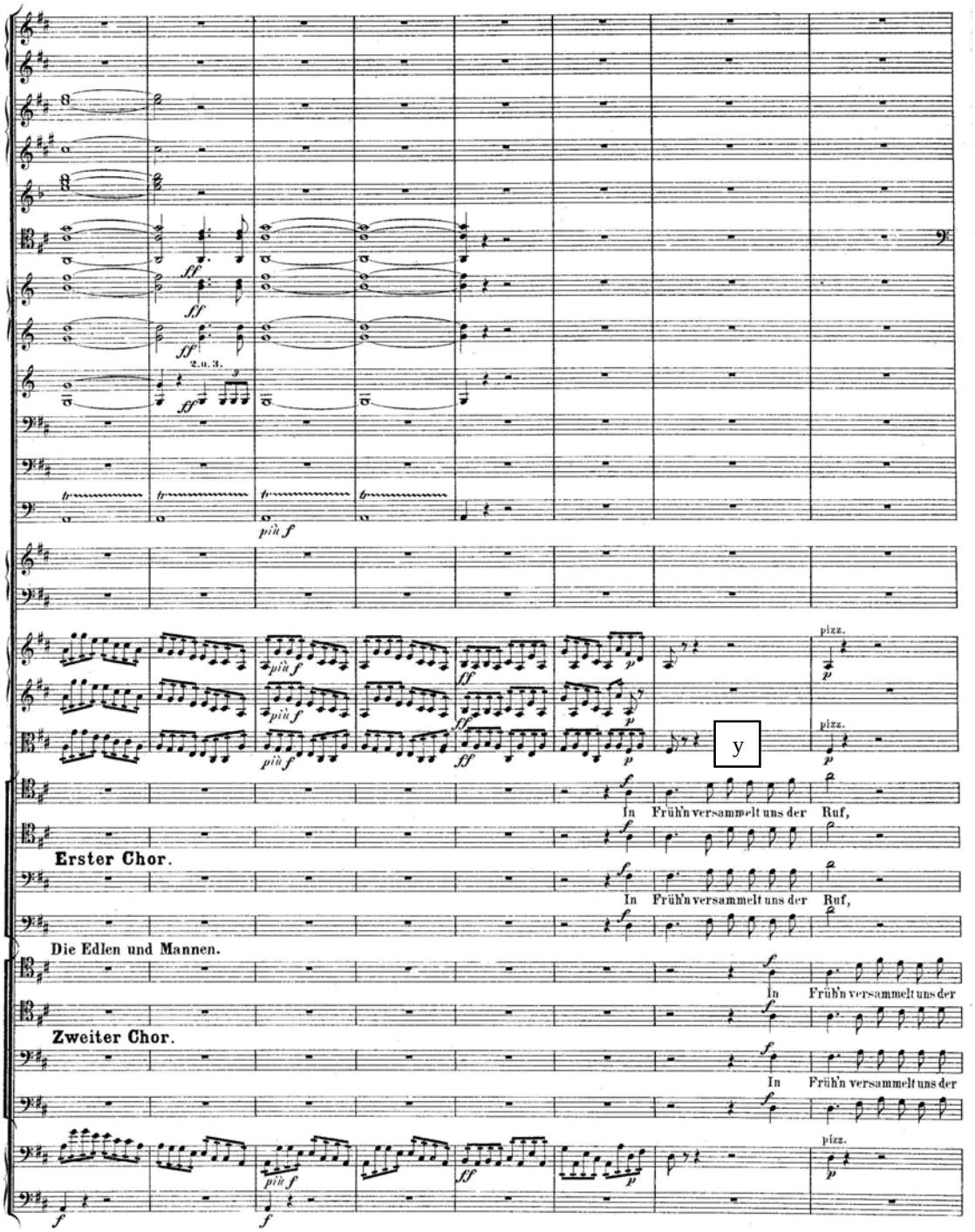
Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three (continued).



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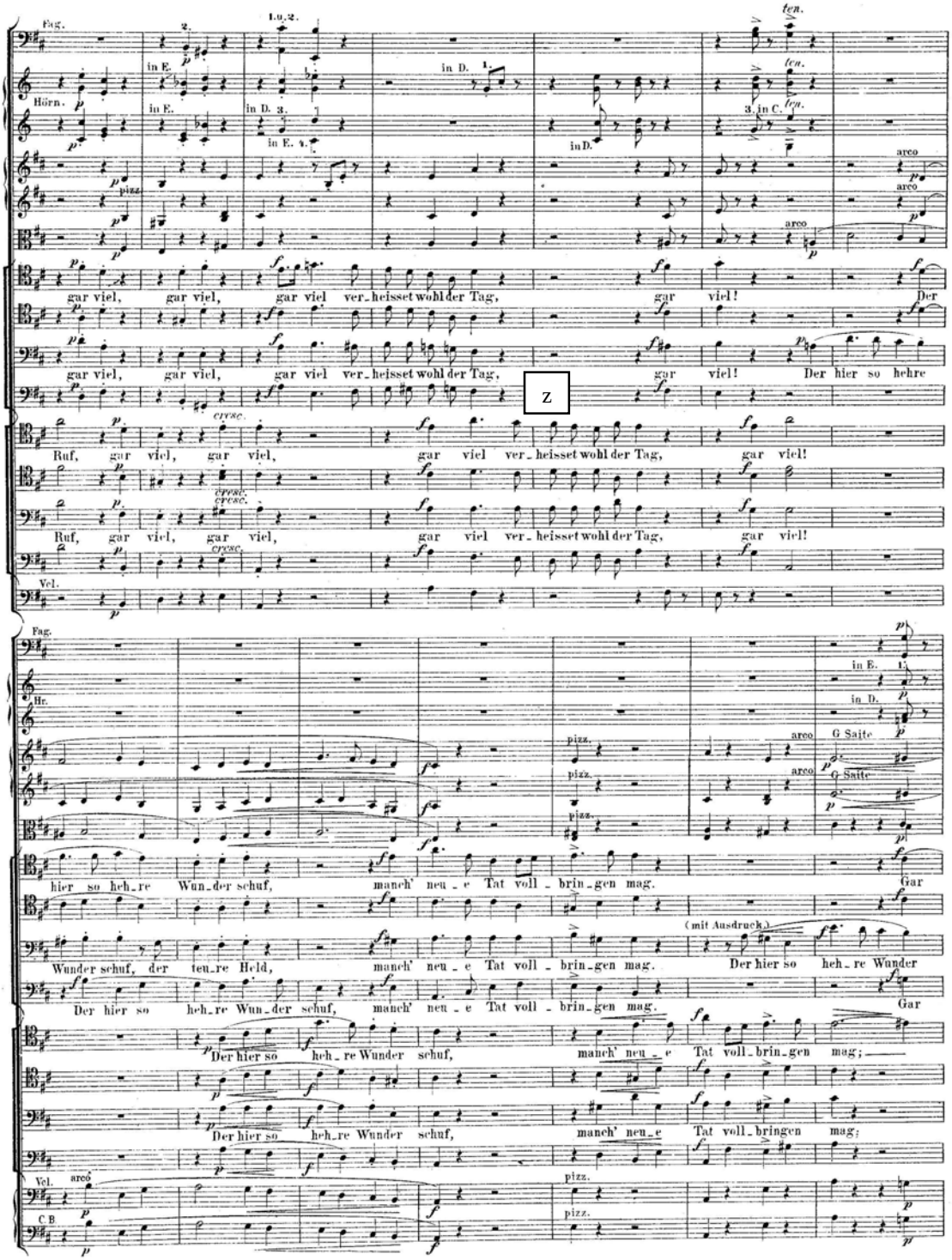
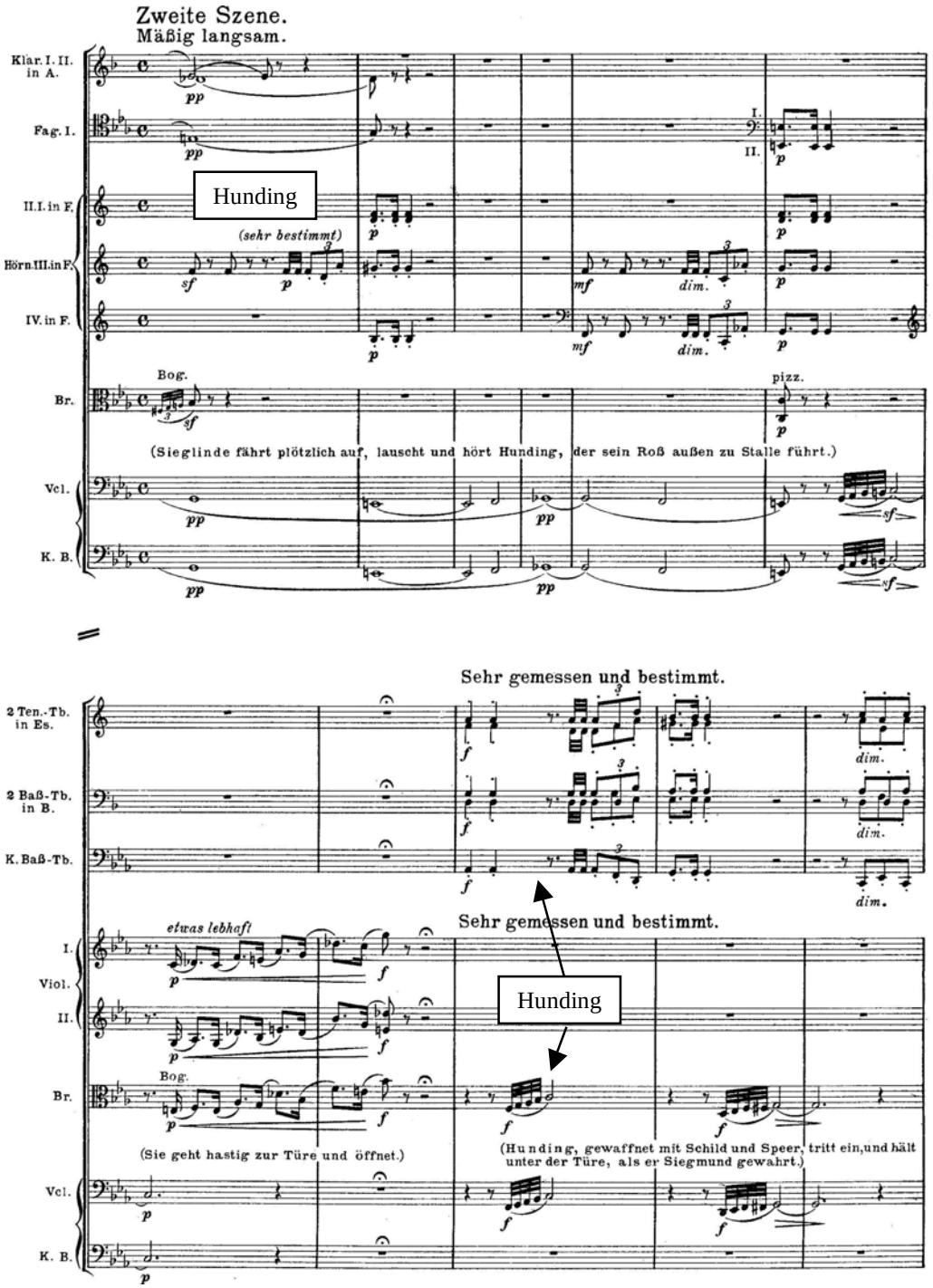
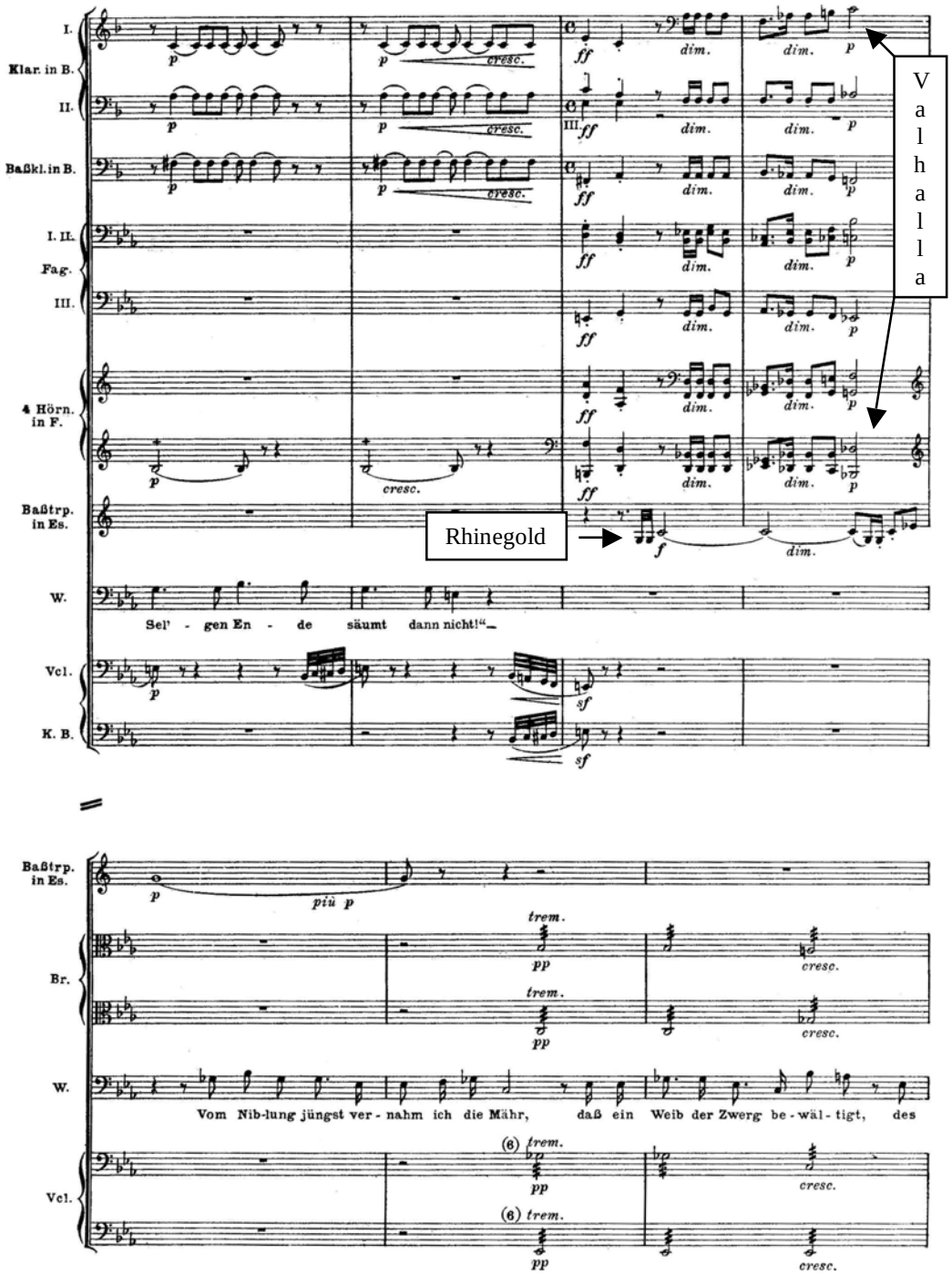
Example 5. *Lohengrin*, Act Two, Scene Three (continued).



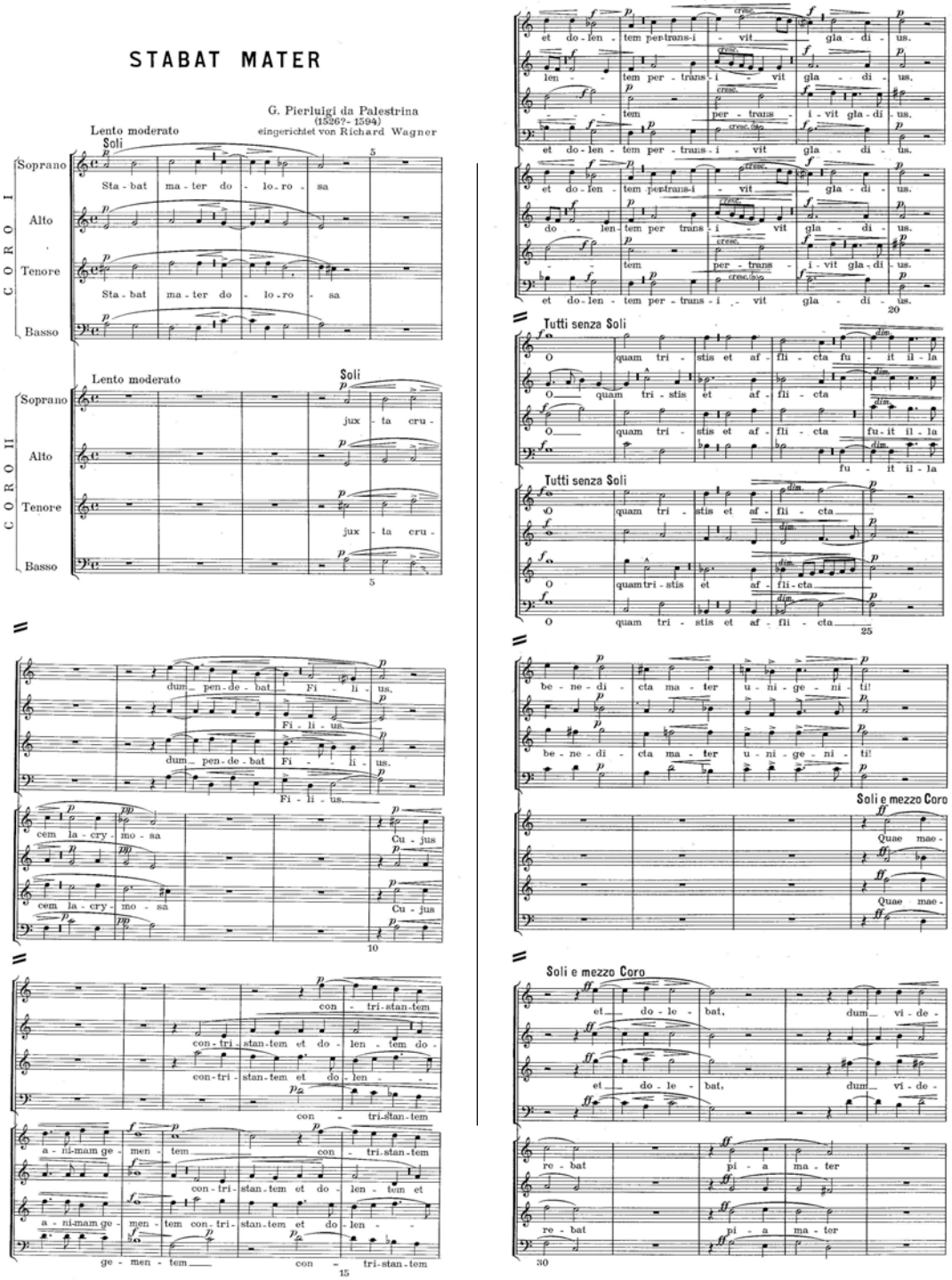
Example 6. *Die Walküre*, Act One, Scene Two: Hunding's highly rhythmic motive accompanies his entrance.



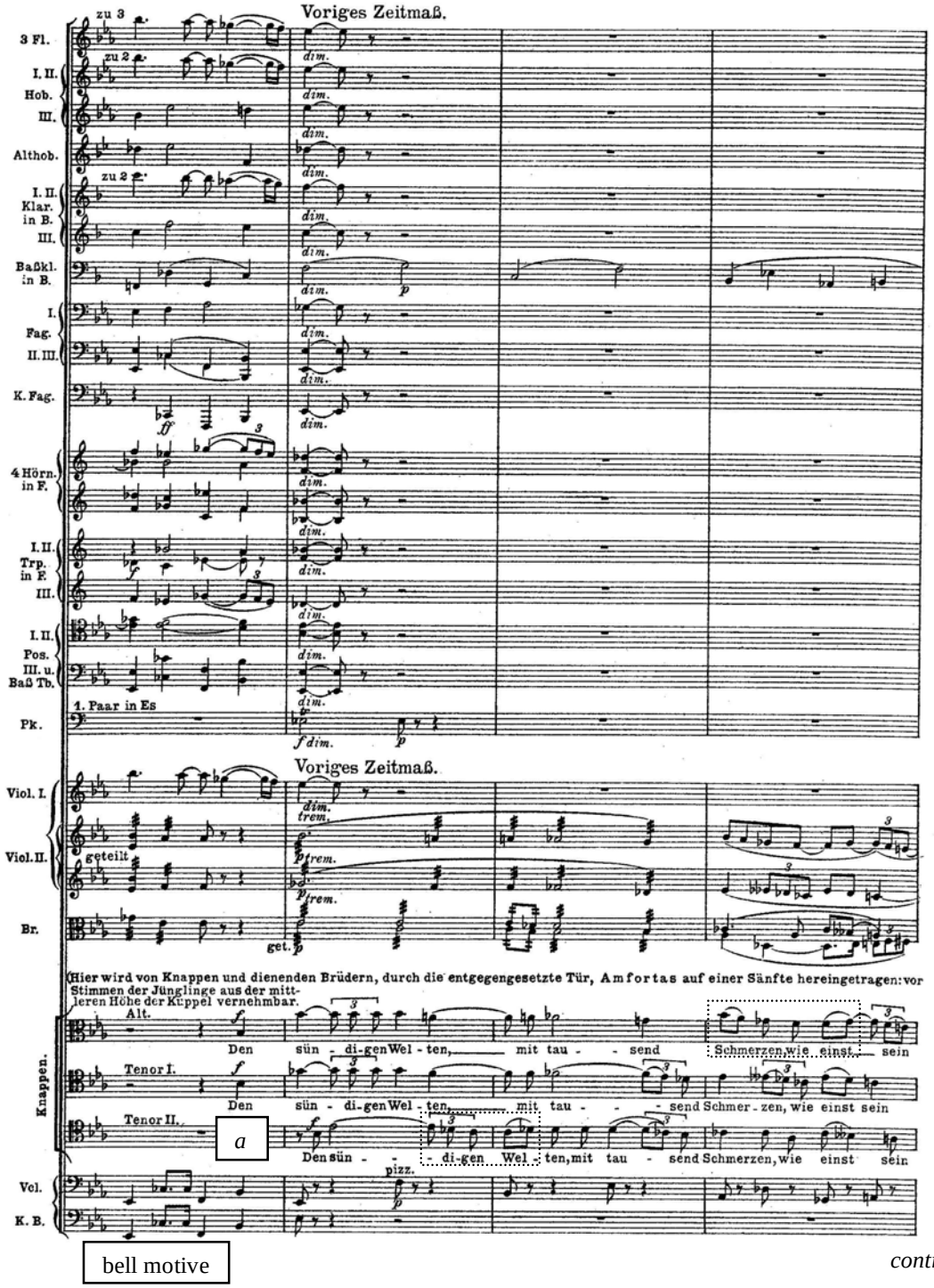
Example 7. *Die Walküre*, Act Two, Scene Two: Wotan tells of Hagen's conception to a new compound motive (using the Valhalla and Rhinegold motives). Note the rhythmic similarity to Hunding's motive (Example 6).



Example 8. Palestrina, *Stabat mater*, arranged by Wagner (opening): Palestrina's subtle polychoral effects are used for dynamic contrasts. Wagner's additions of dynamic markings and accents, characteristic of the nineteenth century, reinforce the original effects. Also, note the predominantly homorhythmic and syllabic setting of the text.



Example 9. *Parsifal*, Act One: Archaic choral writing in the first grail scene. Note the use of heterophonic and declamatory vocal writing with motives passing from voice to voice (opening section); this gives way to a more contrapuntal chorale style ("Der Glaube lebt").



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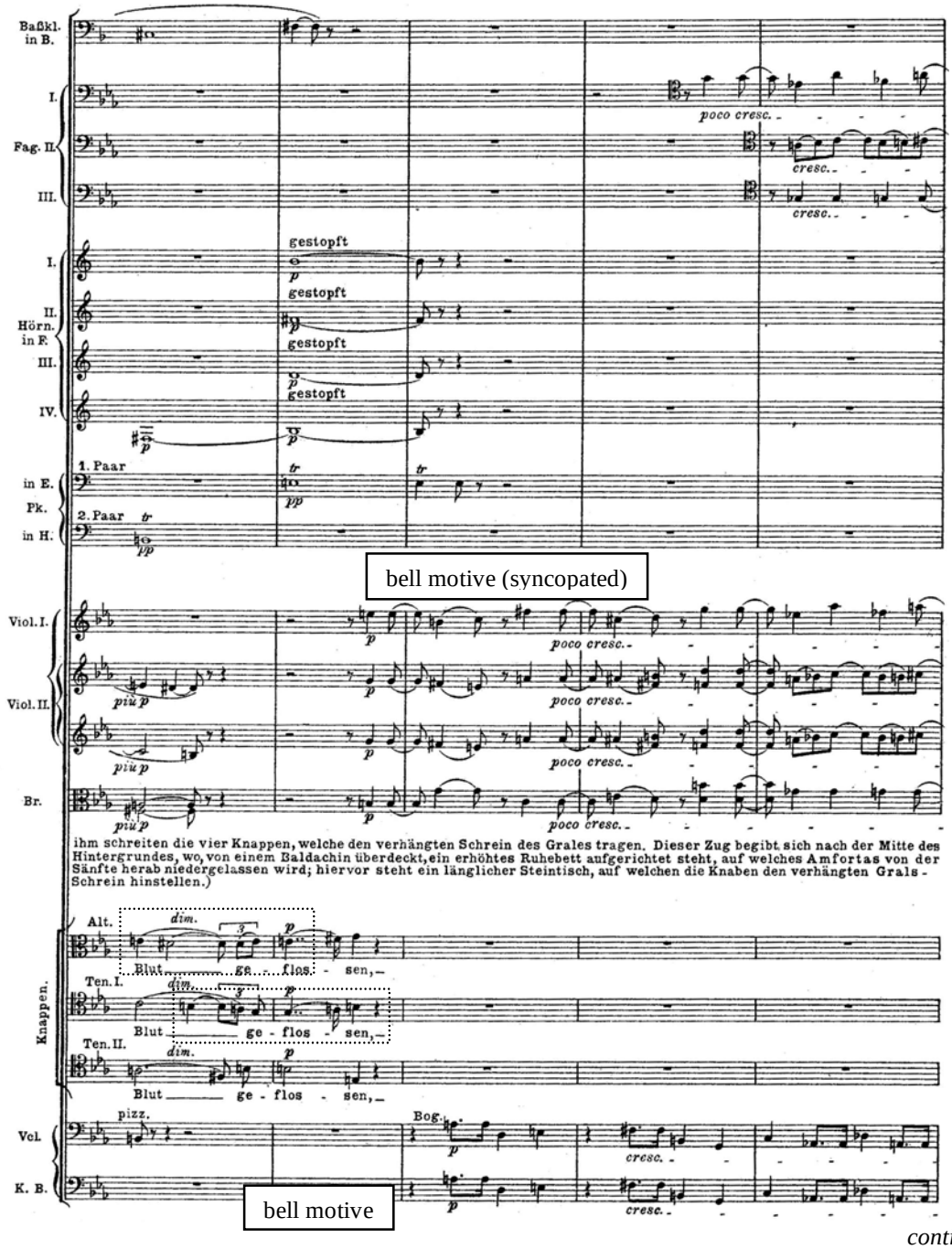
Example 9. *Parsifal,* Act One (continued).



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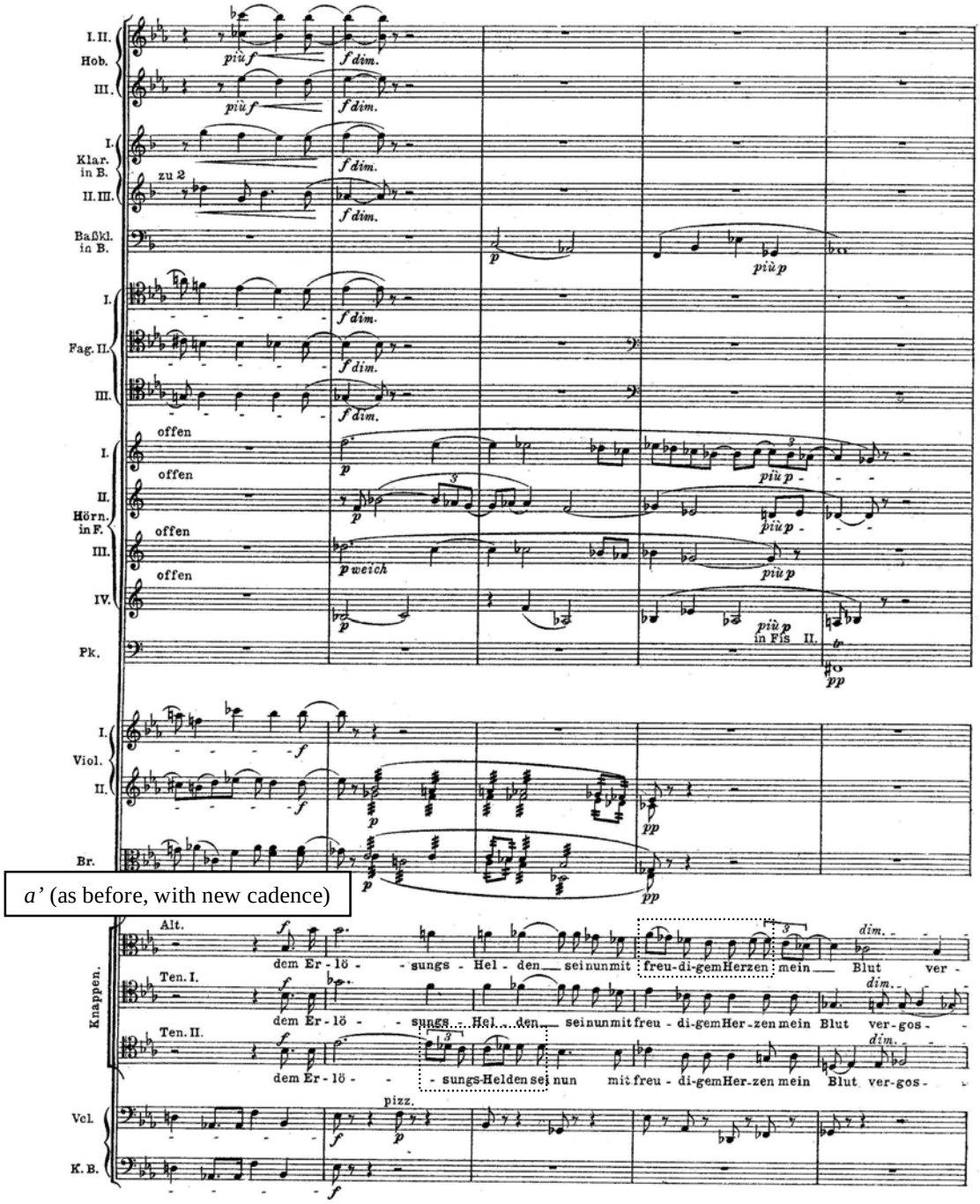
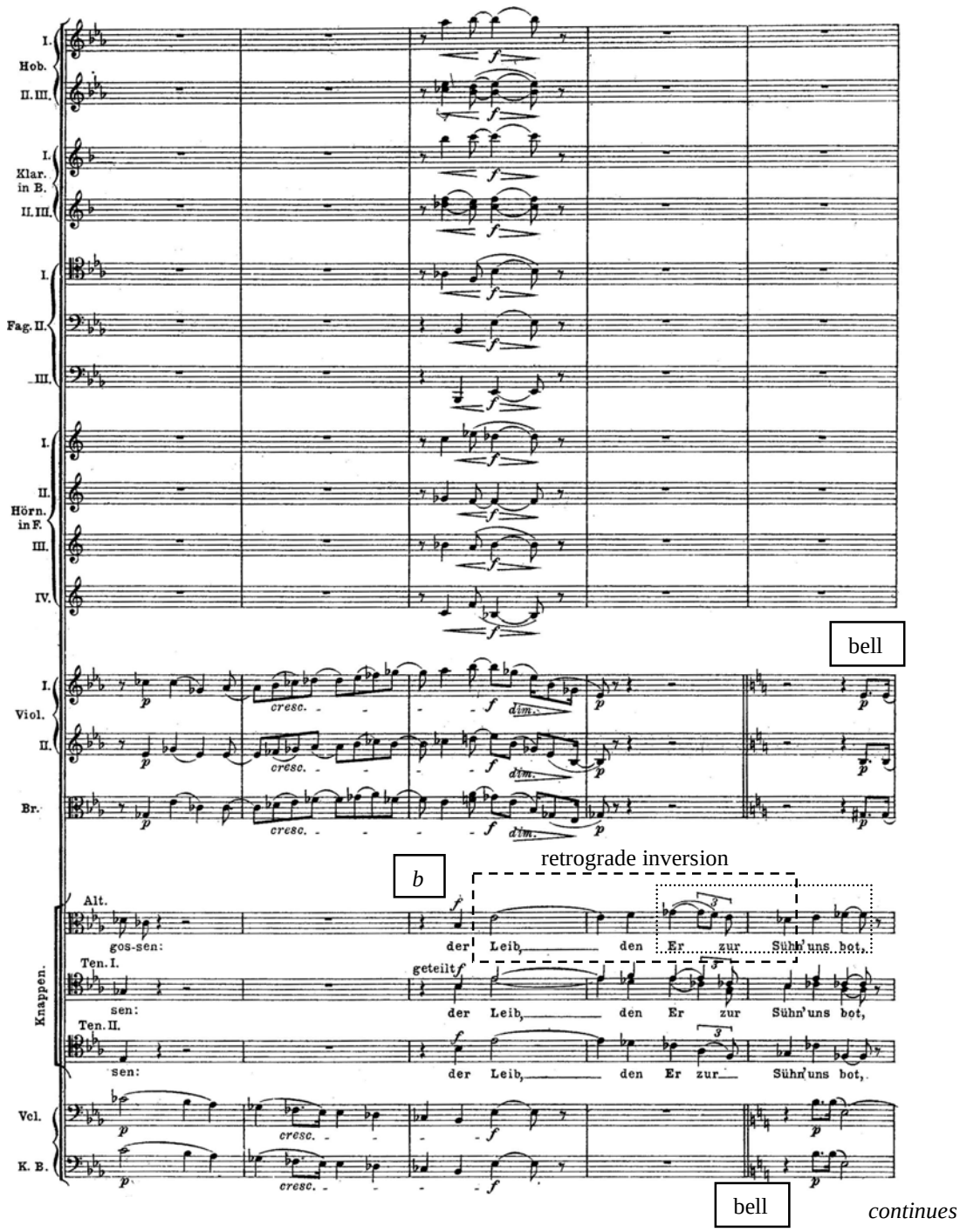
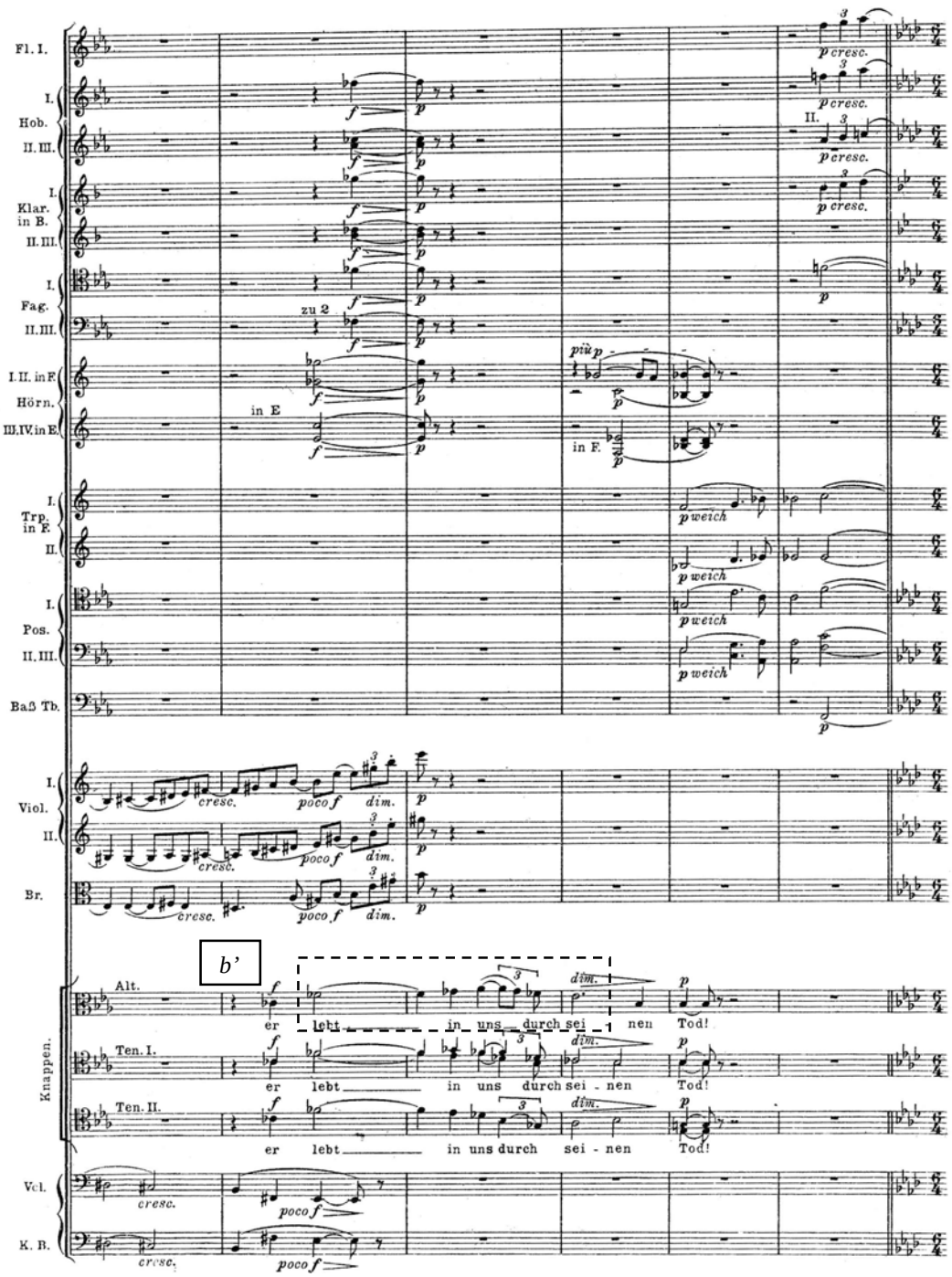
Example 9. *Parsifal*, Act One (continued).



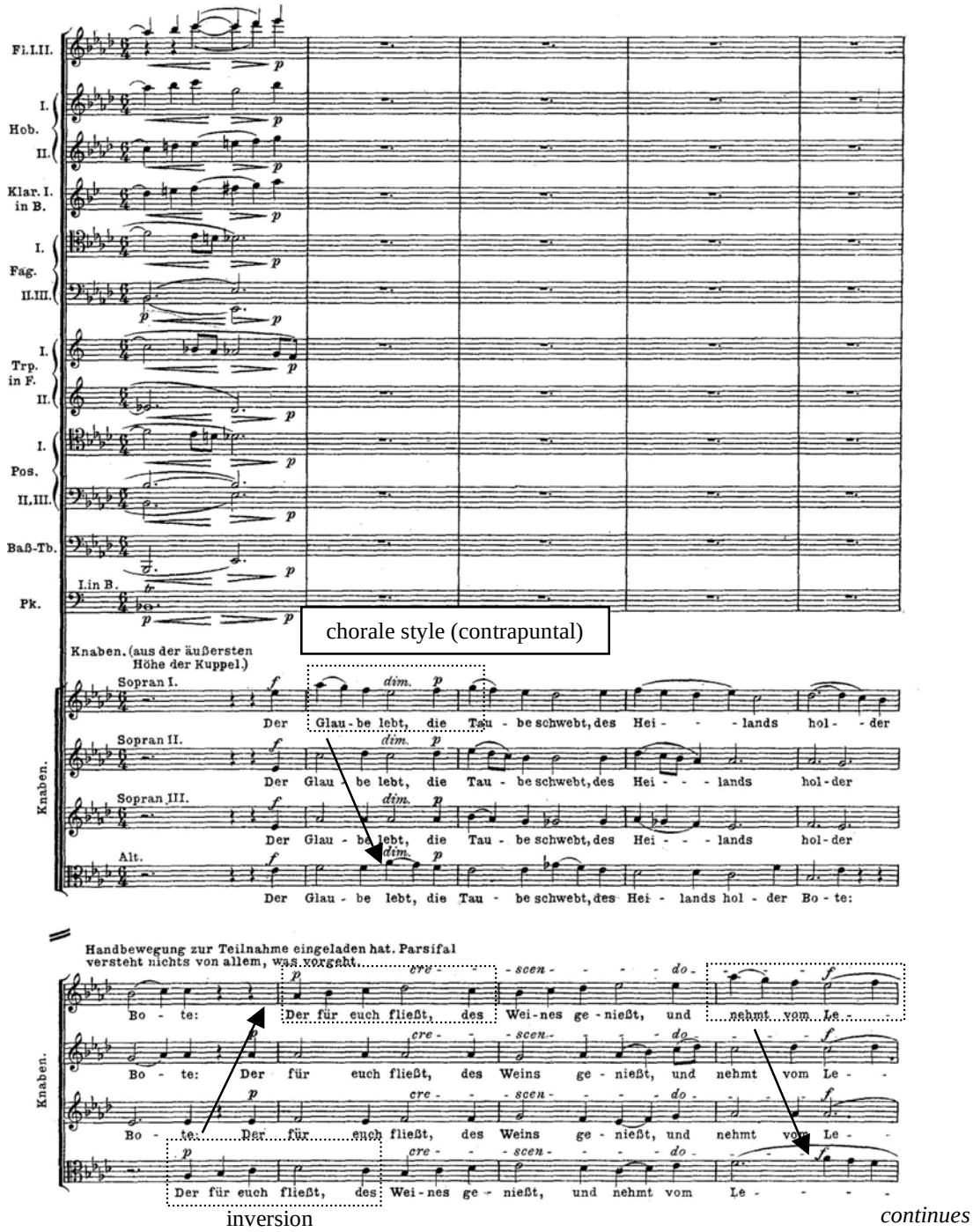
Example 9. *Parsifal*, Act One (continued).



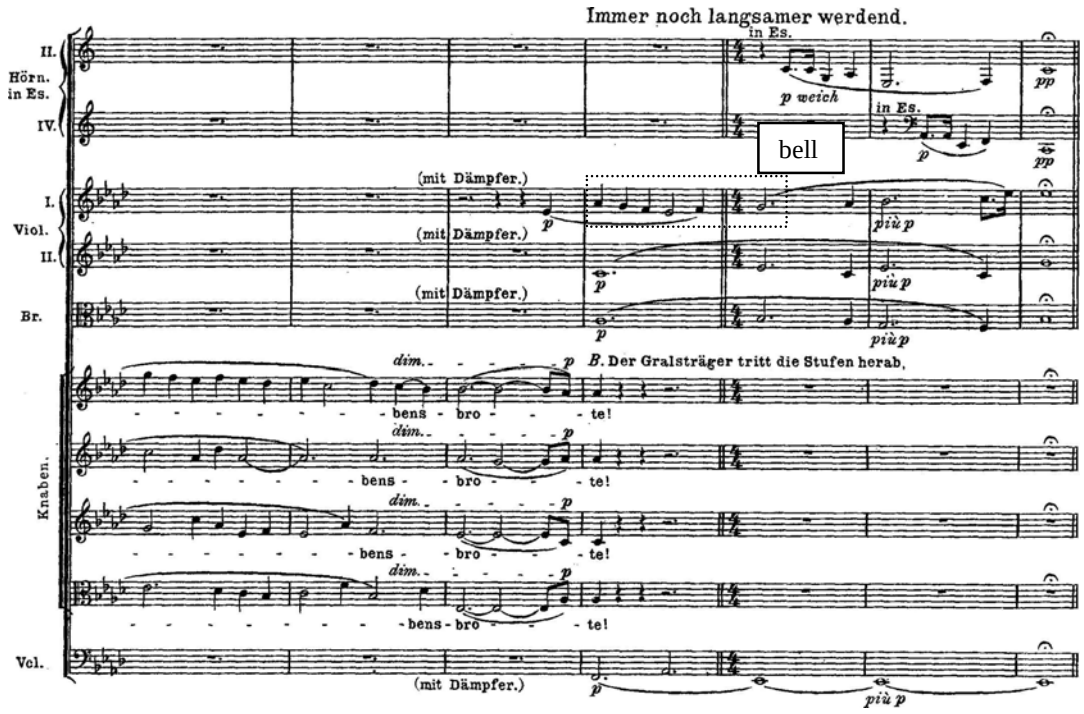
Example 9. *Parsifal,* Act One (continued).



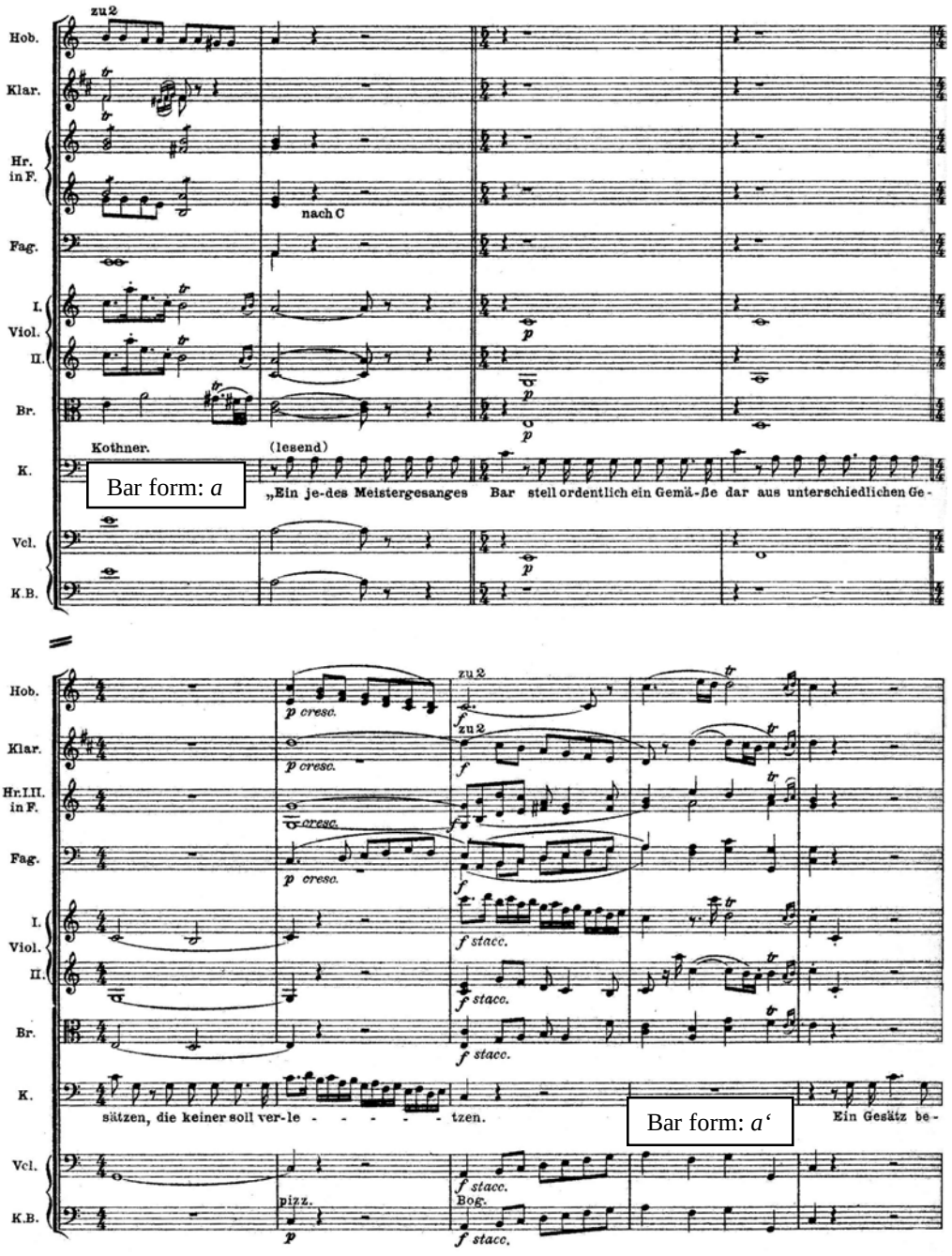
Example 9. *Parsifal,* Act One (continued).



Example 9. *Parsifal,* Act One (continued).



Example 10. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene Three: Kothner reads the Tabulatur using the style of recitative with melismas used to elucidate the form. Note the extra Stollen in the Bar form (*a a' a" b*).



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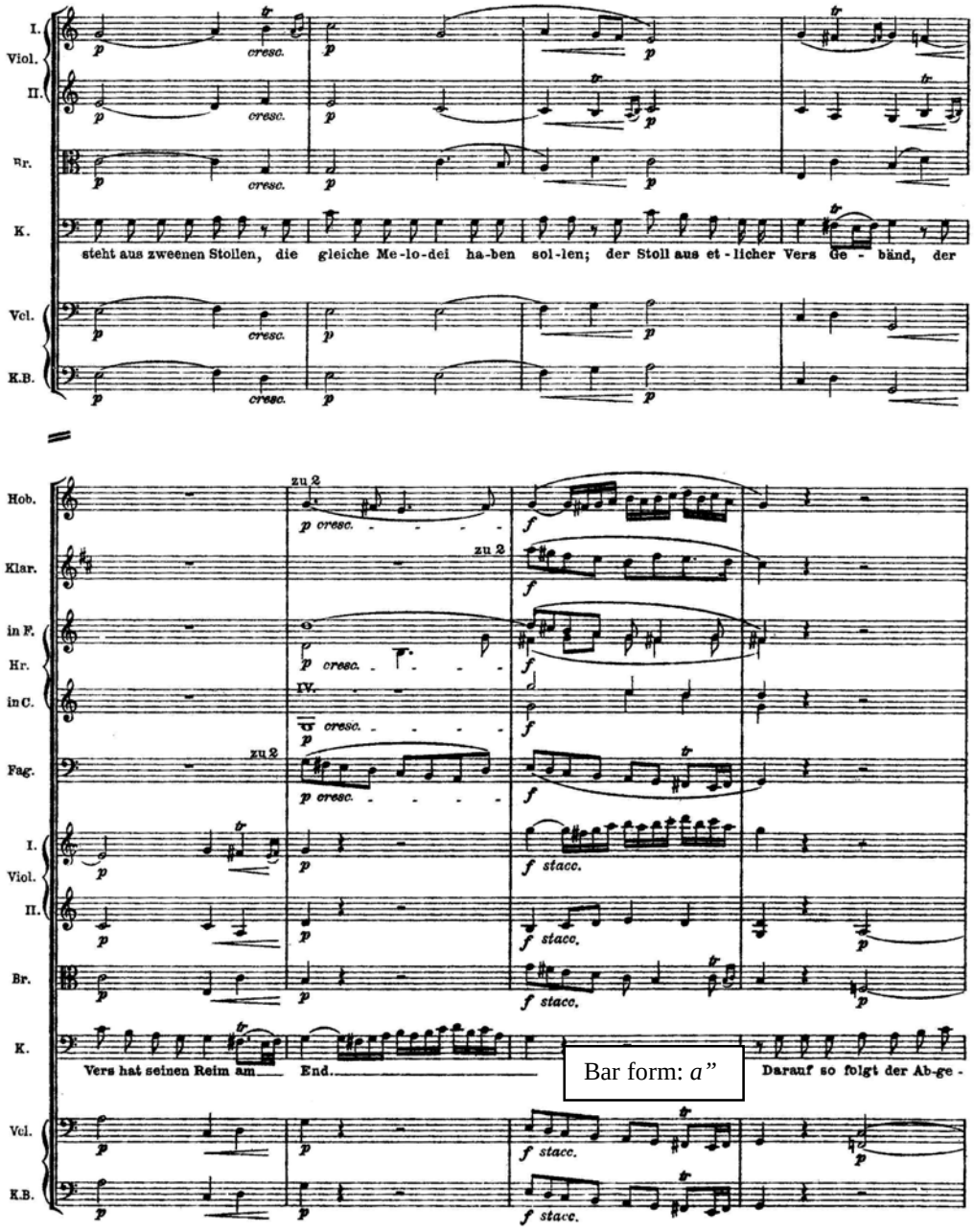
Example 10. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene Three (continued).



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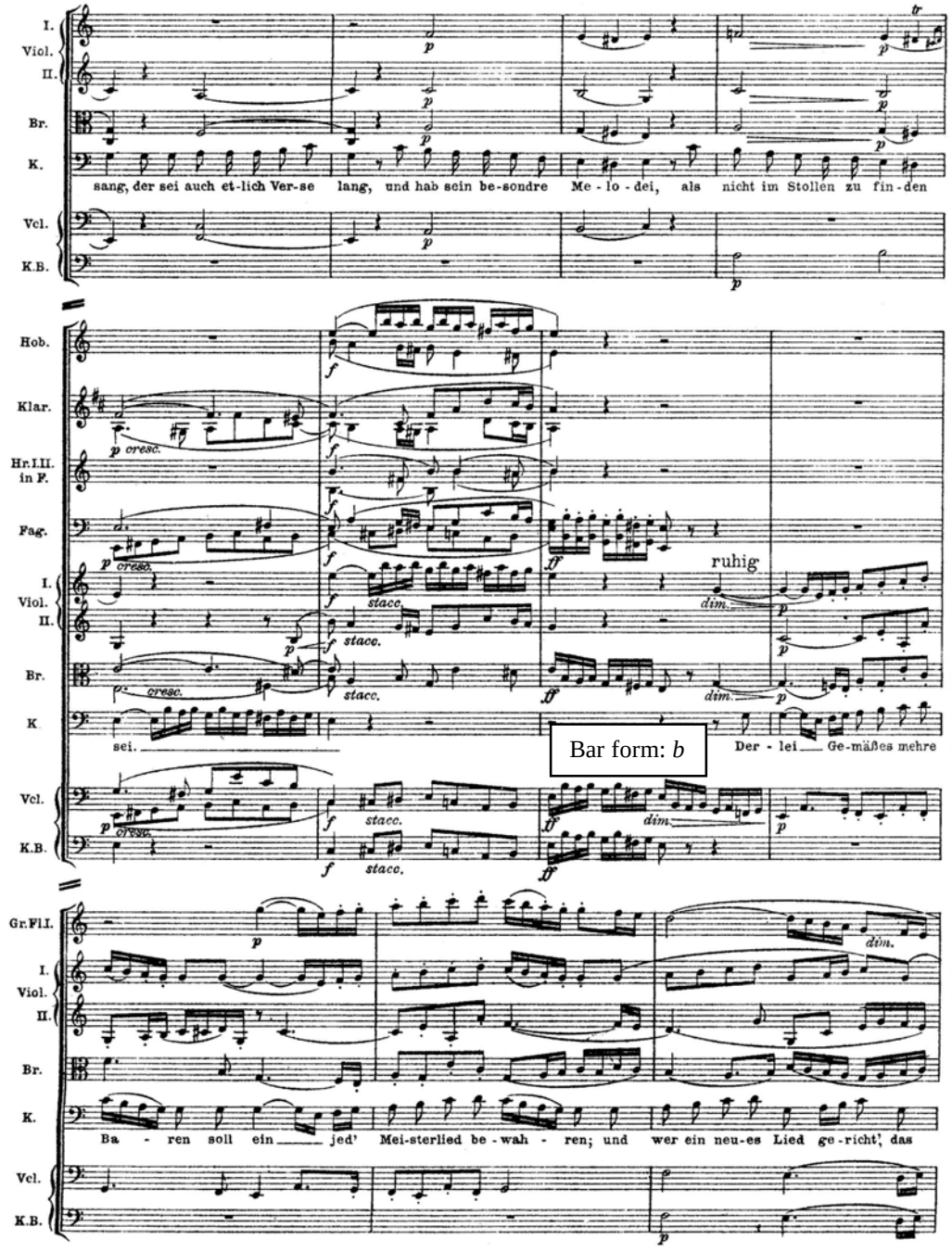
Example 10. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene Three (continued).



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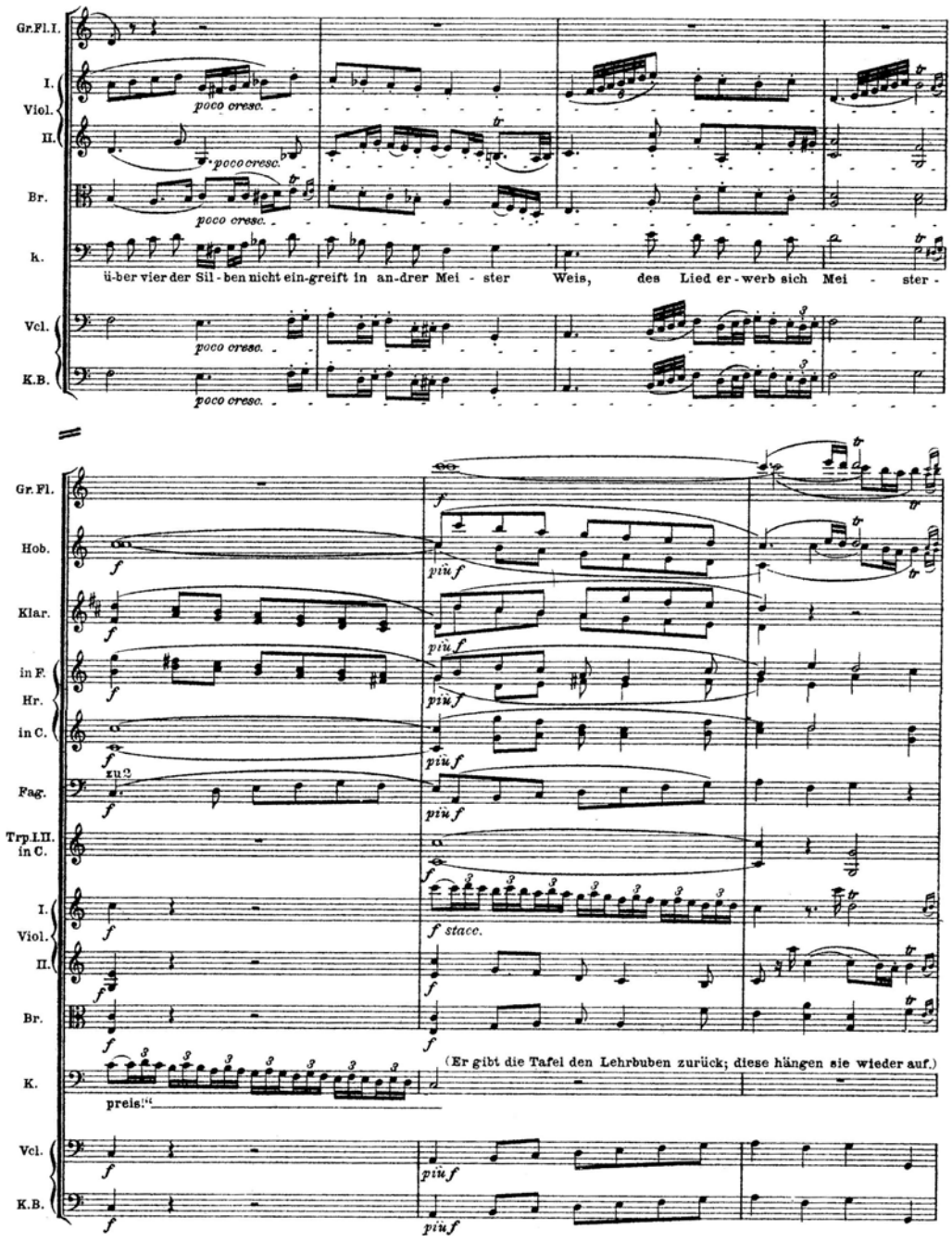
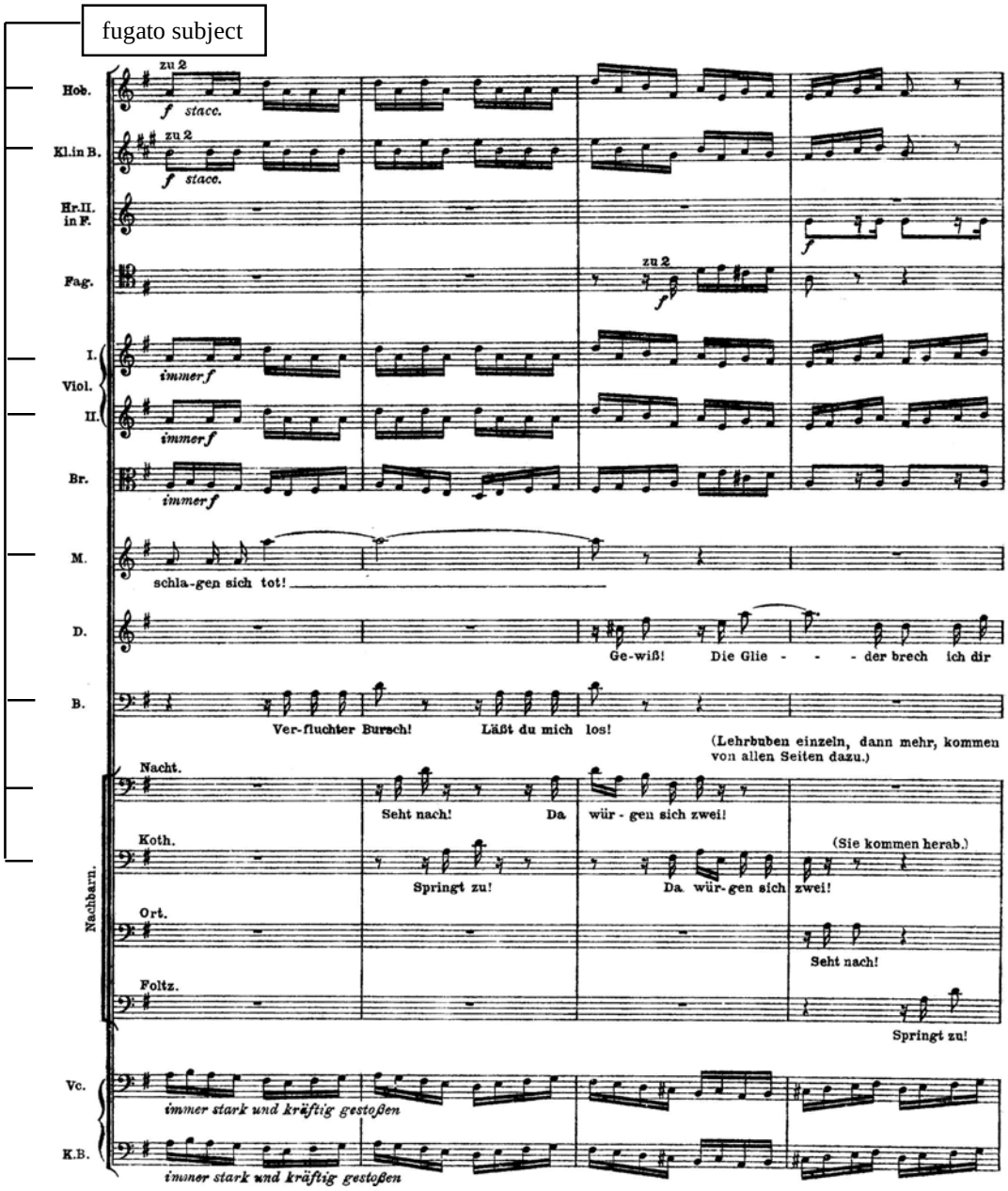
Example 10. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act One, Scene Three (continued).



Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,* Act Two, Scene Seven: The fugato riot involving the full town. The melody of Beckmesser's serenade is used a *cantus firmus* in the bass (cf. Example 16).



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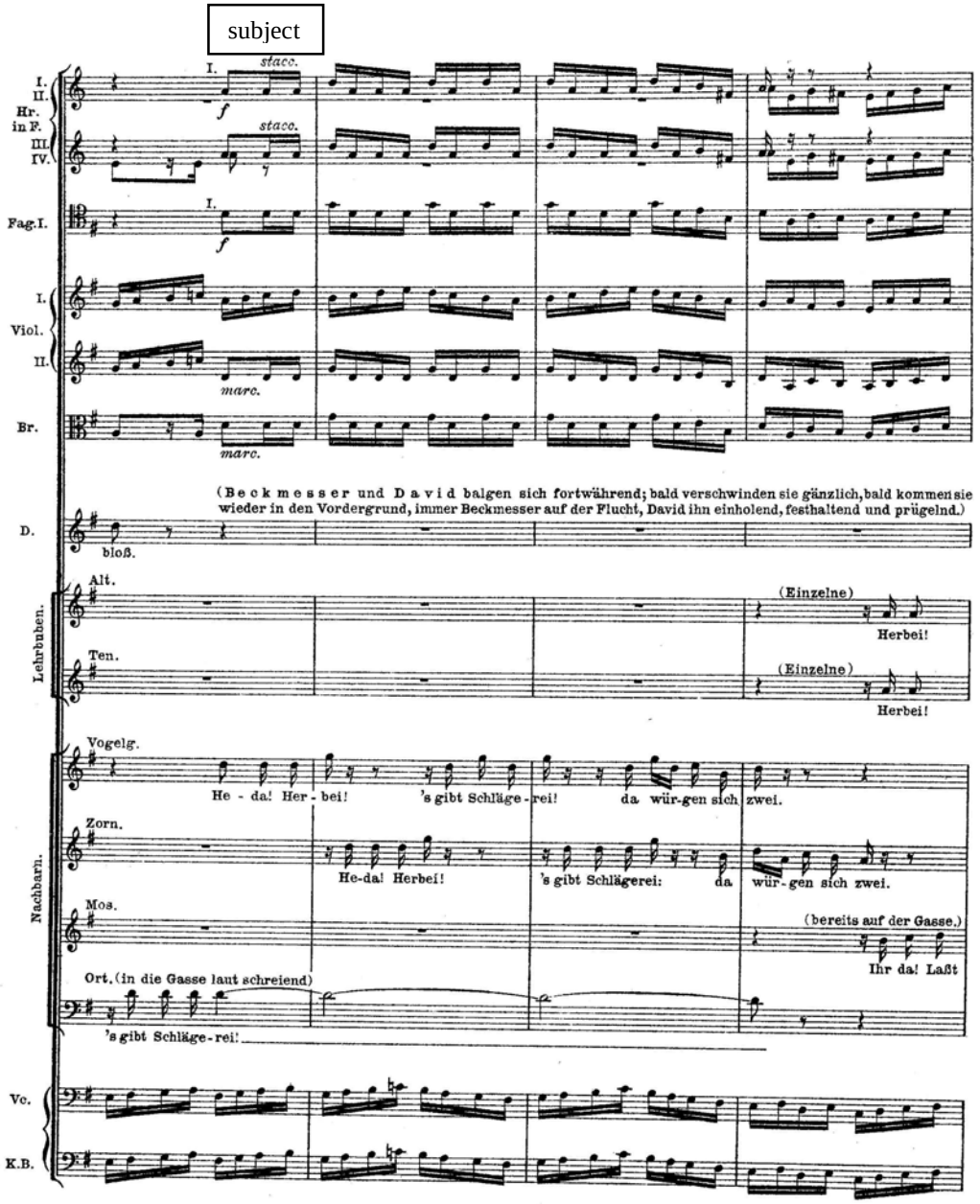
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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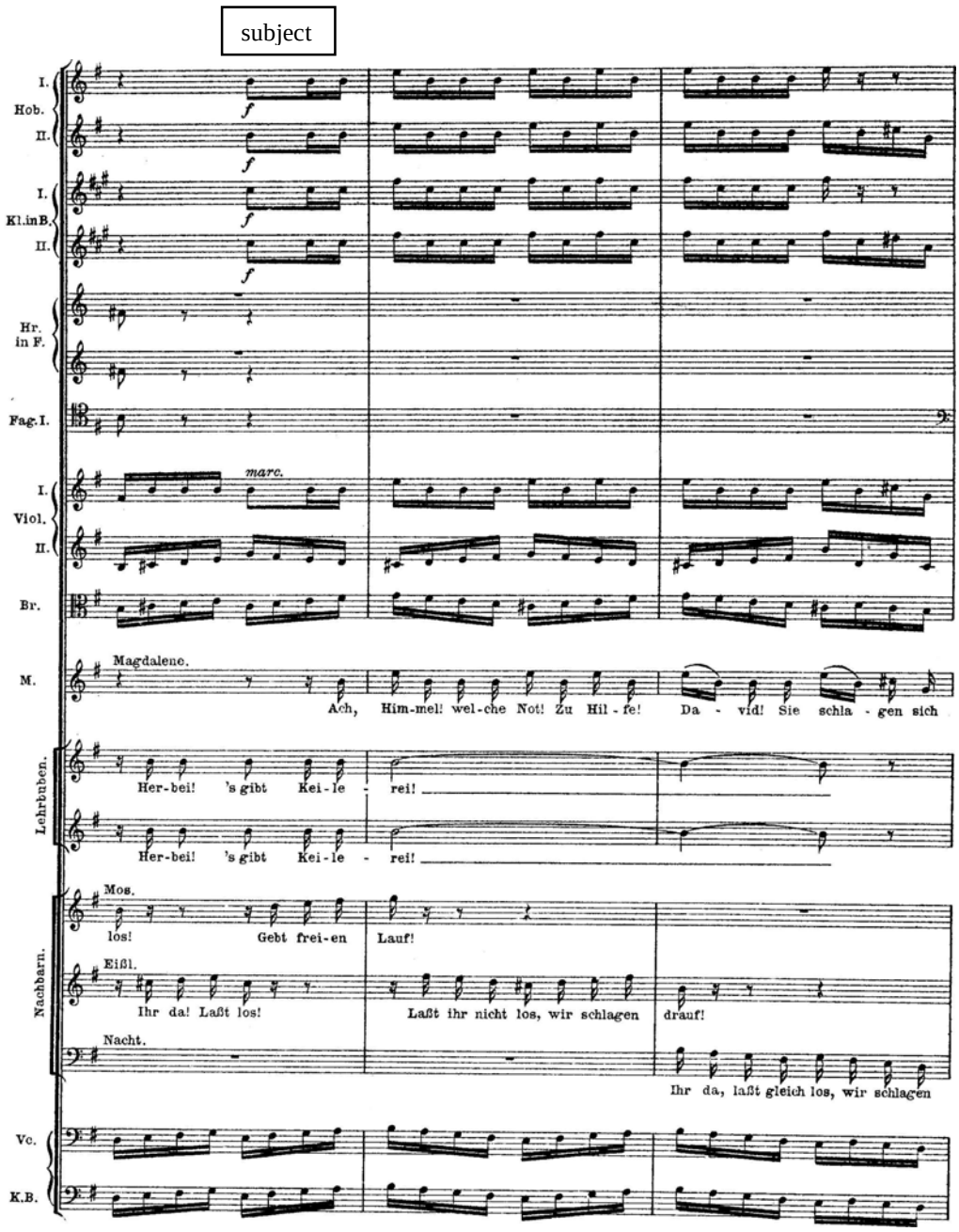
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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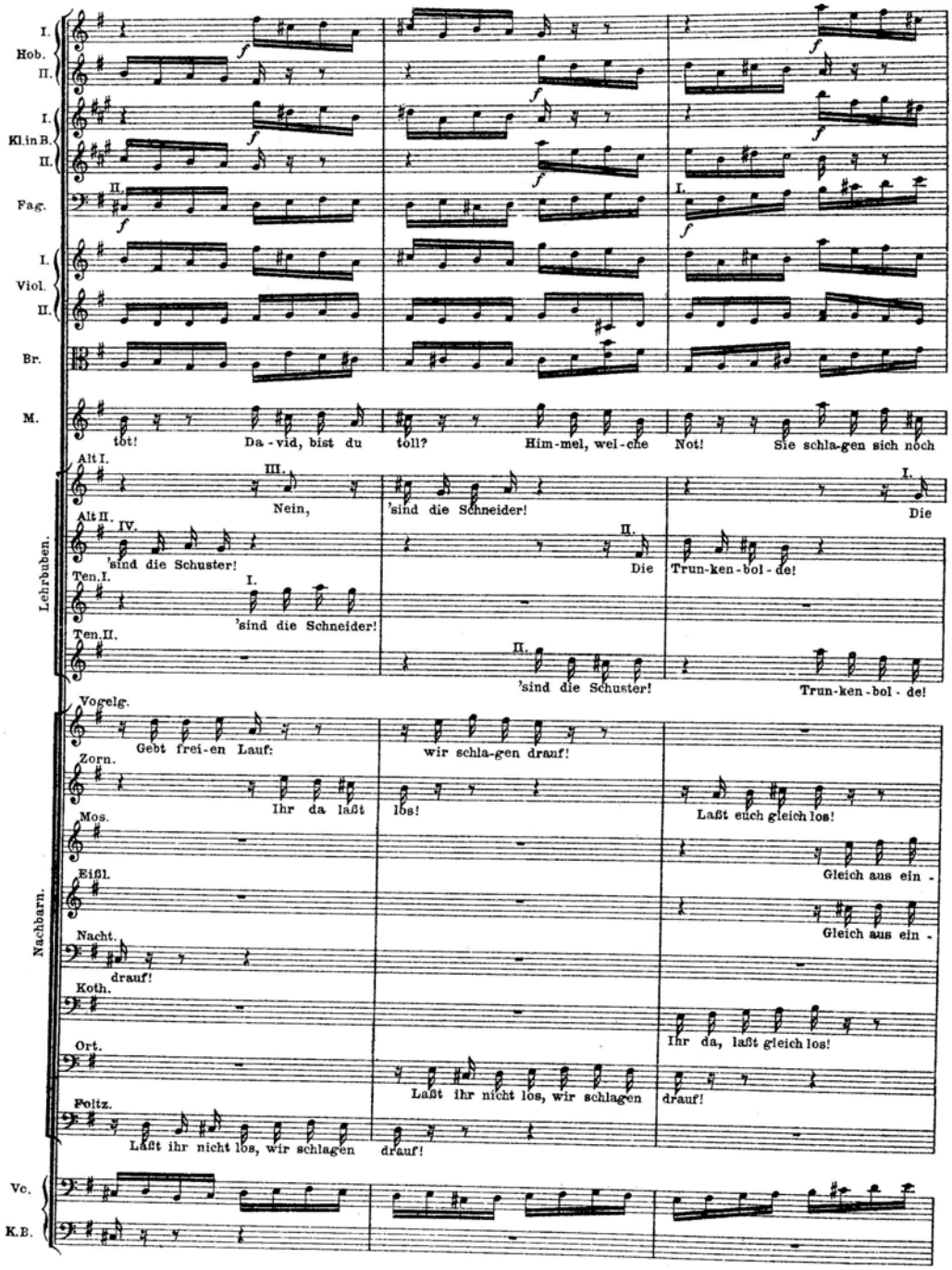
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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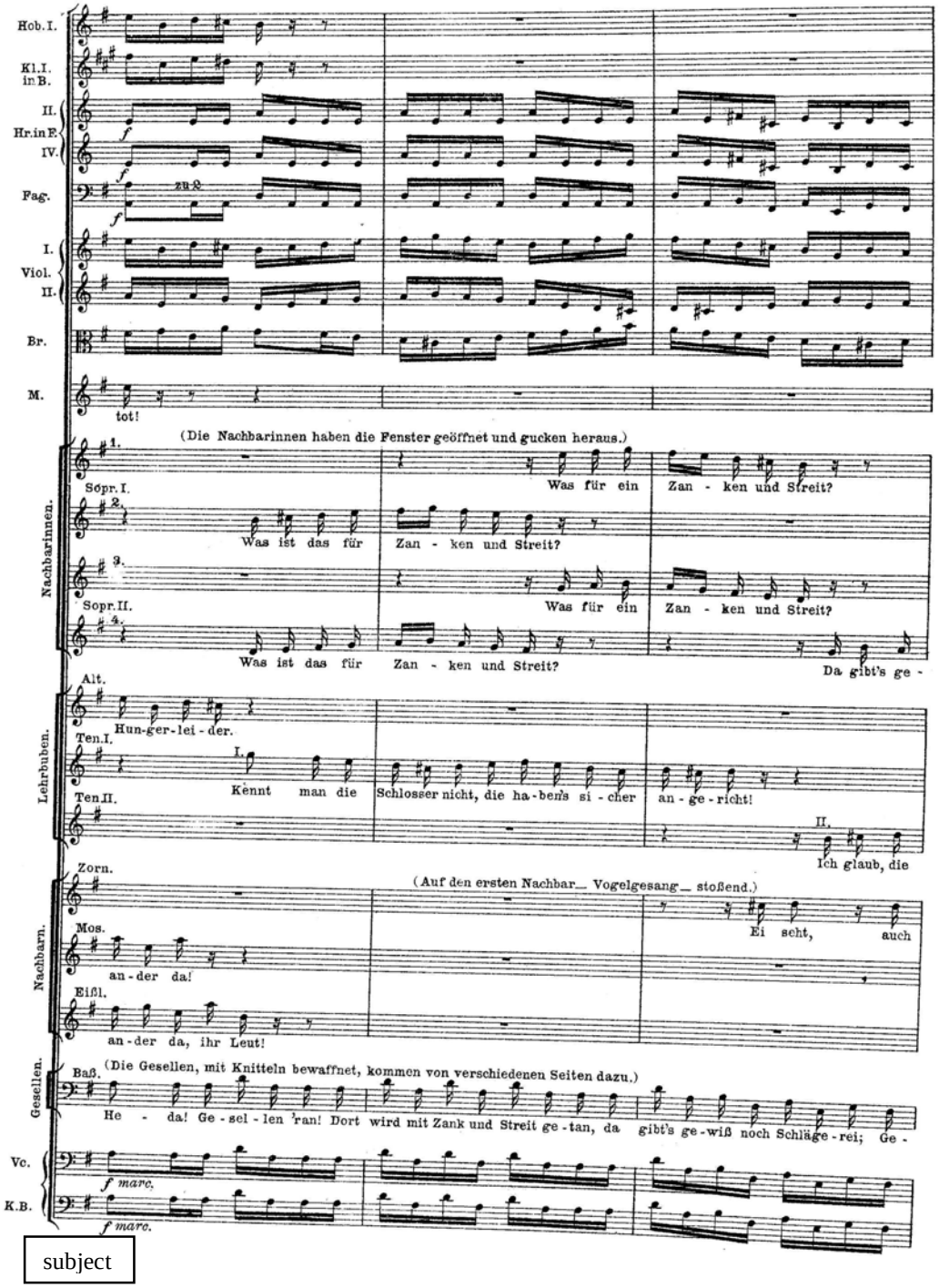
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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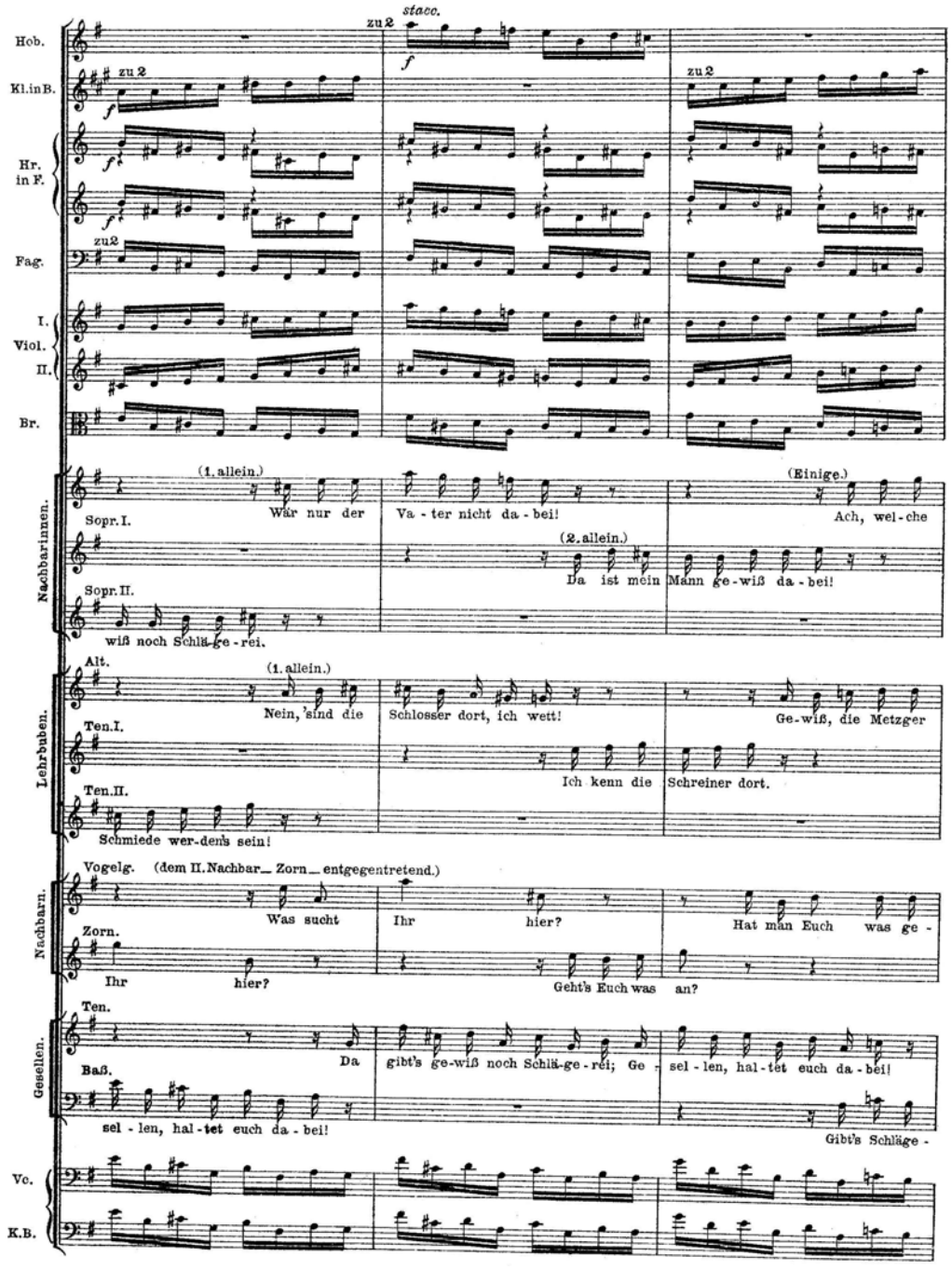
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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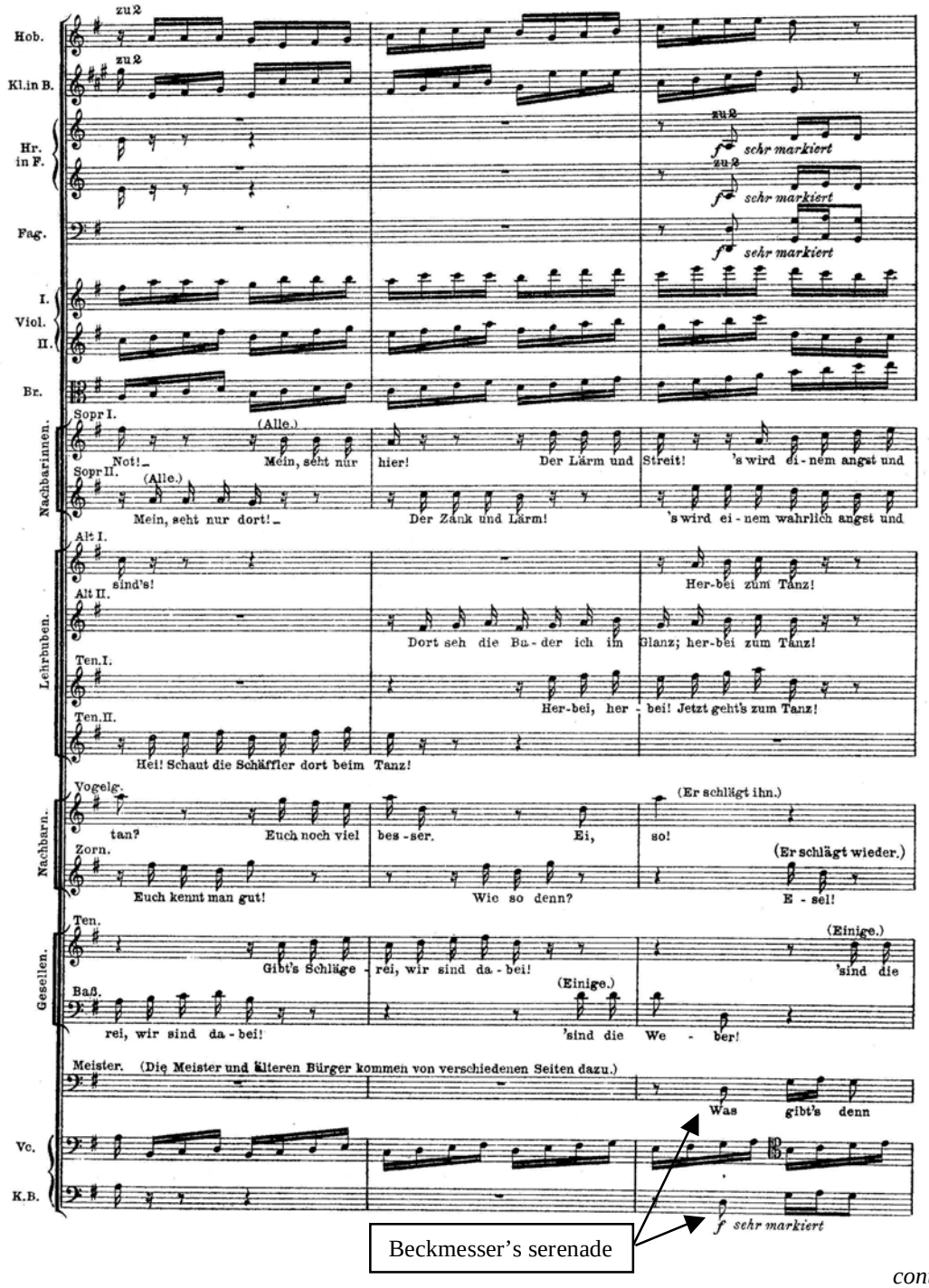
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



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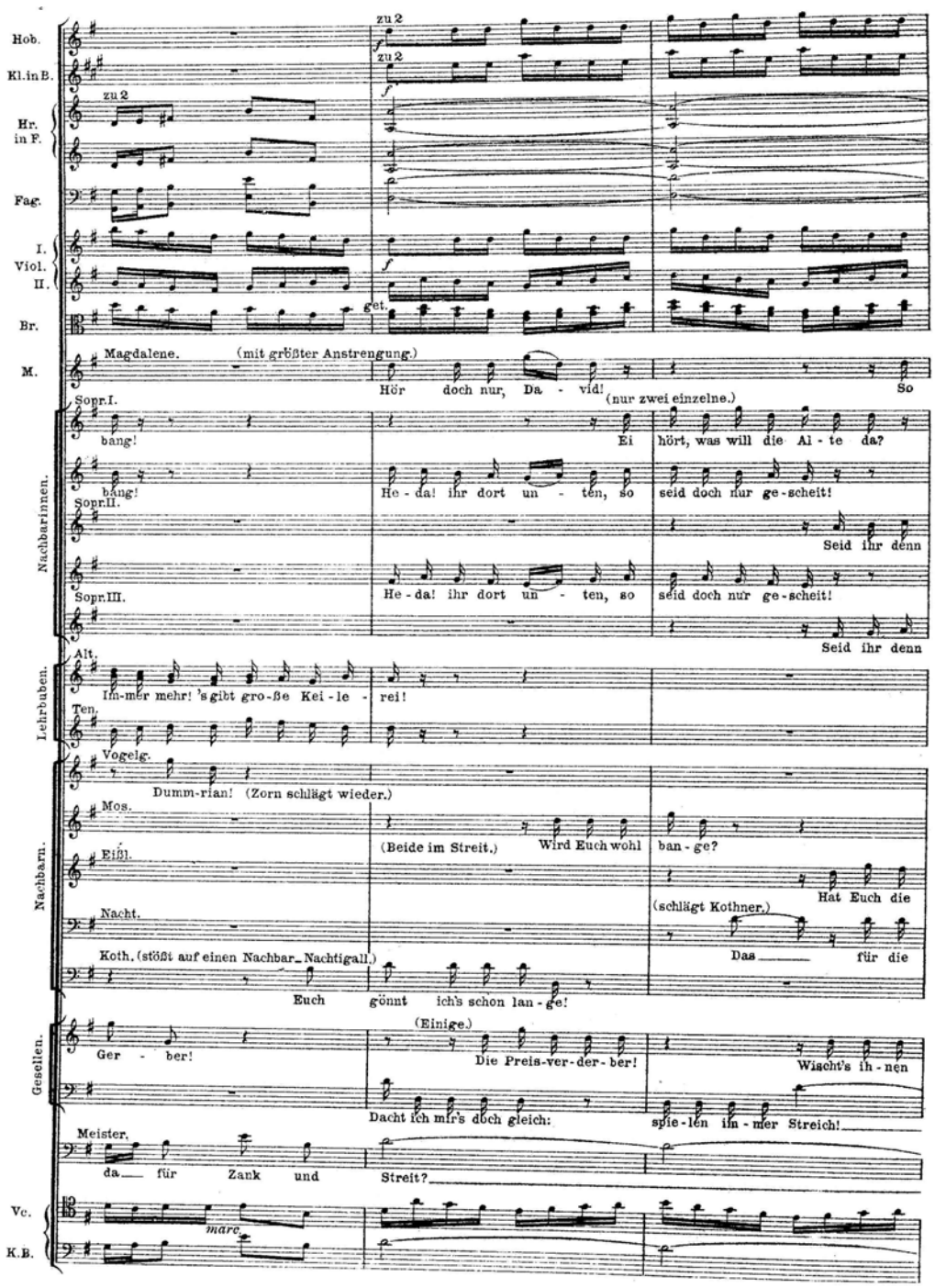
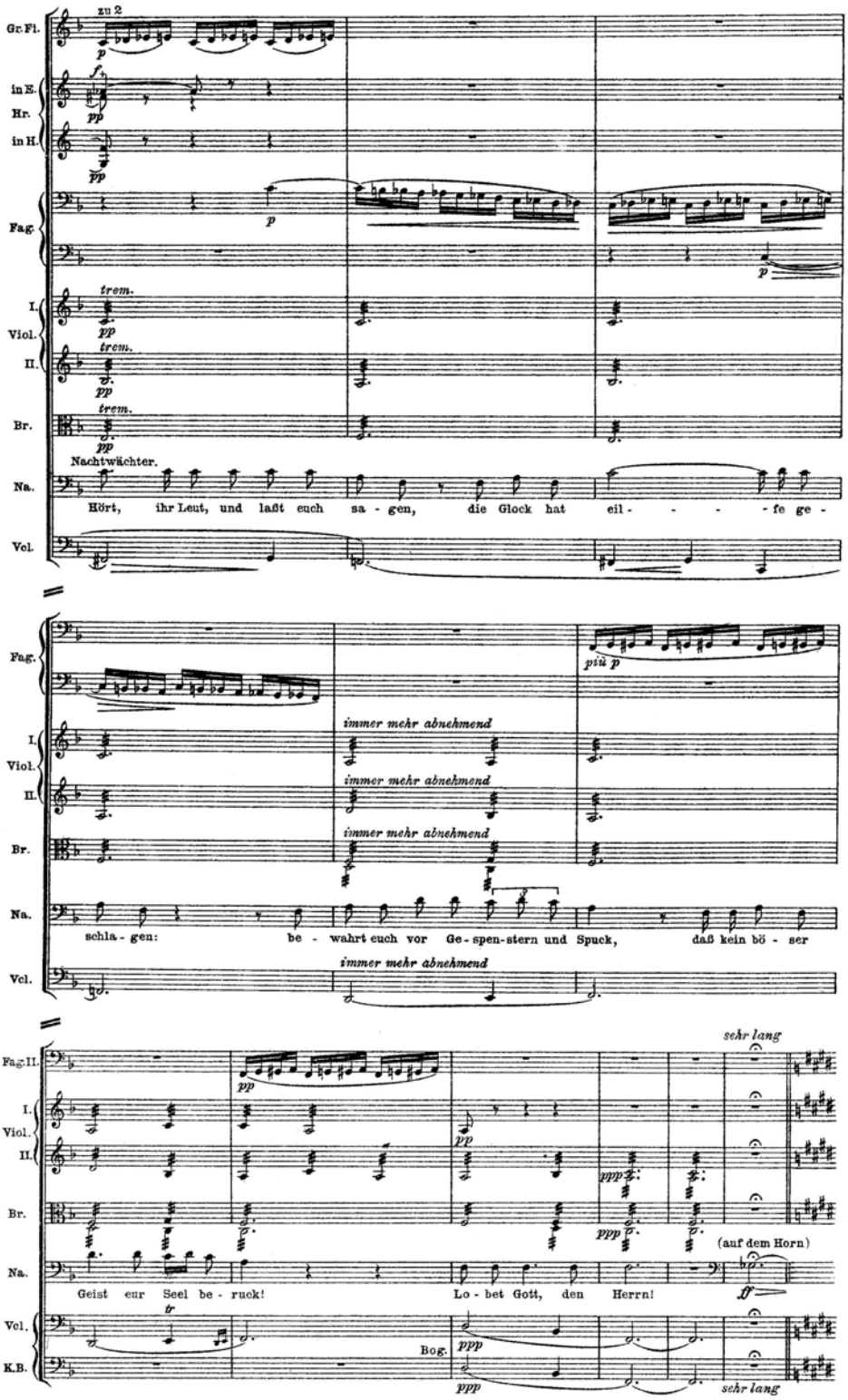
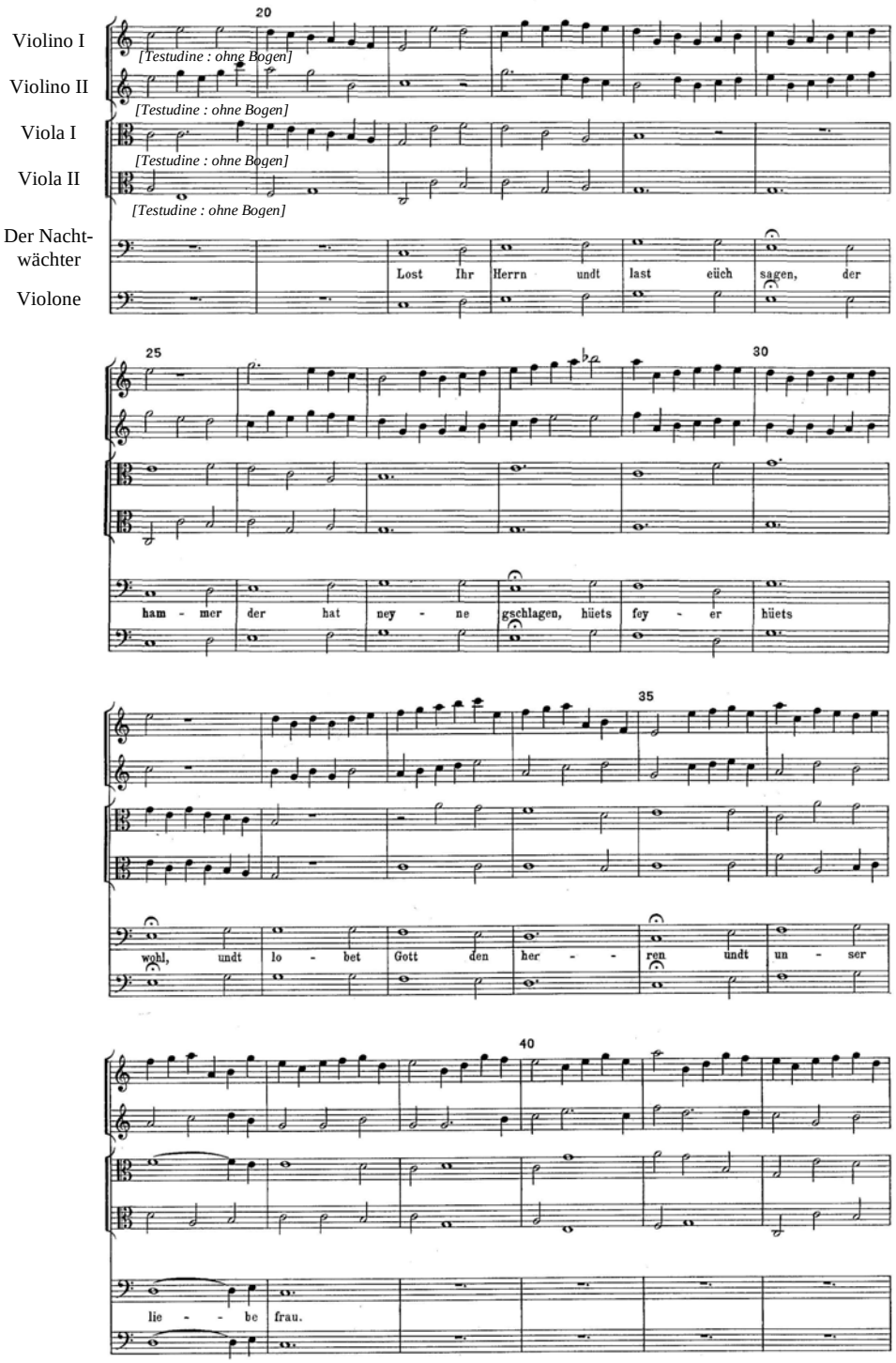
Example 11. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven (continued).



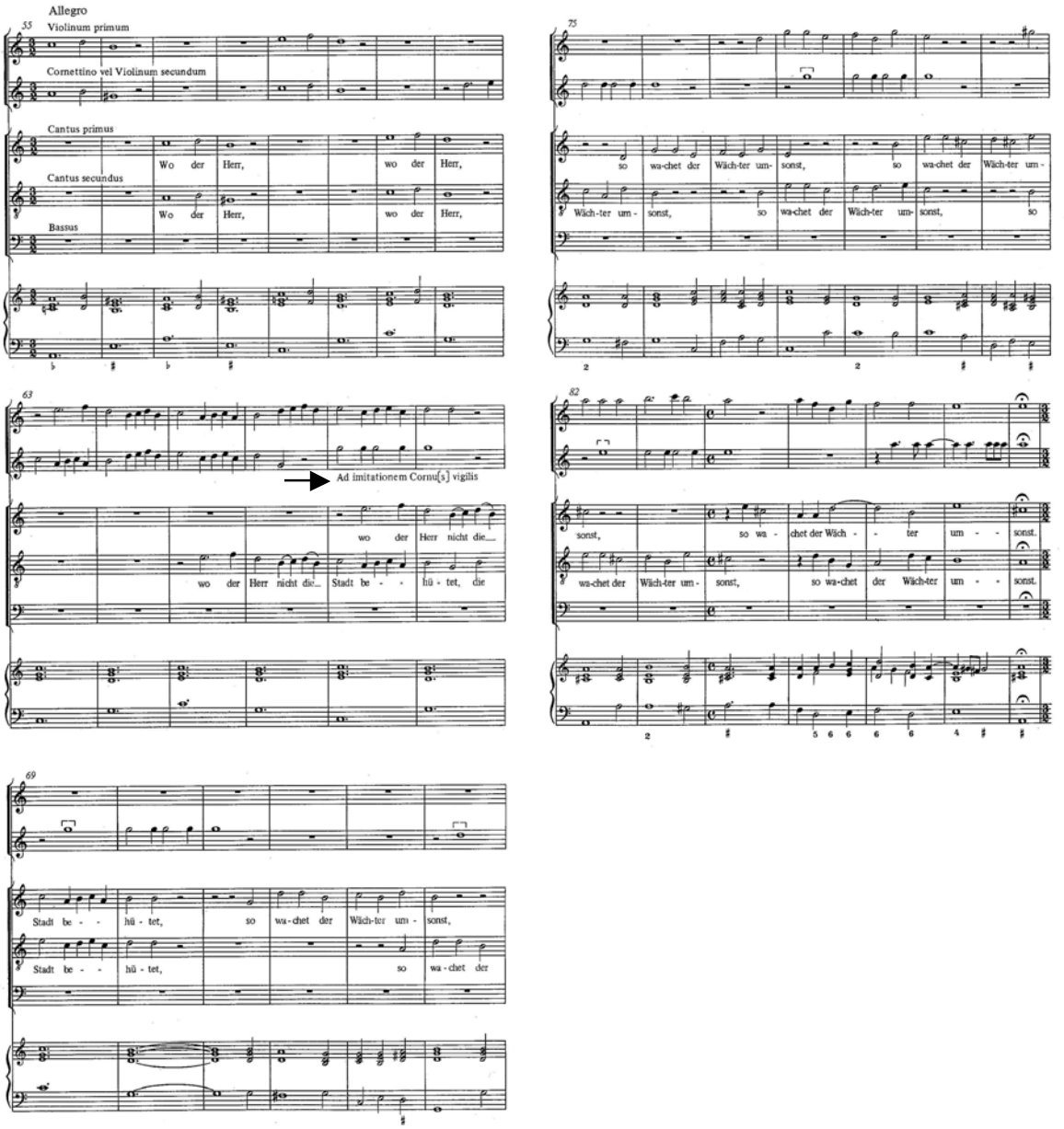
Example 12. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven: The Night Watchman's call with its highly formulaic and declamatory style.



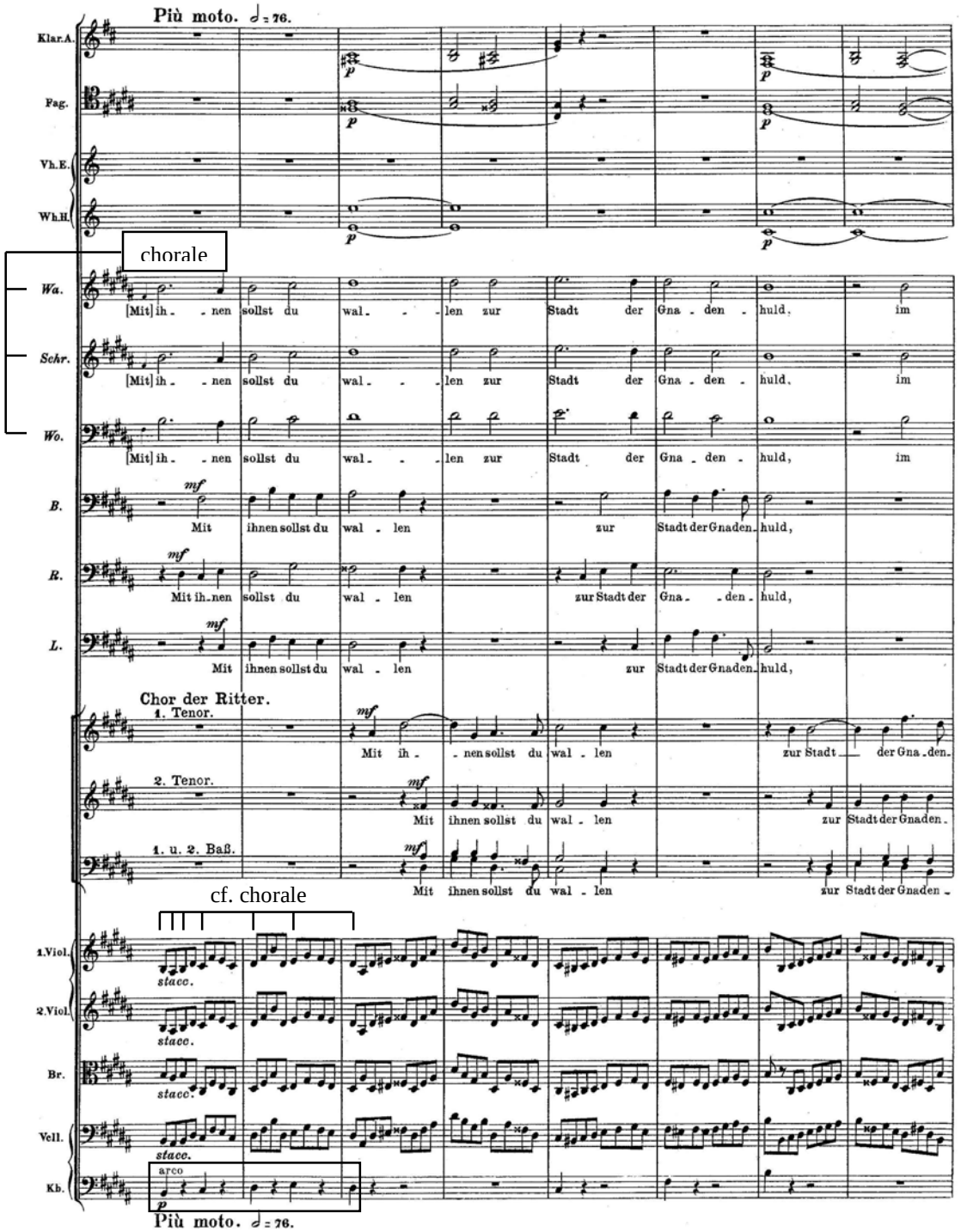
Example 13. Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, Serenade à 5 for strings ("Der Nachtwächter"), fourth movement (*ciacona*): The Night Watchman's melody as a *cantus firmus*.



Example 14. Heinrich Schütz, “Wo der Herr nicht das Haus bauet,” SWV 400, from *Symphoniae sacrae III* (published 1650): The second instrumental part (marked “cornettino or second violin”) is to play “in imitation of the watchman’s horn” (“*Ad imitationem Cornu[s] vigilis*”) in this section.



Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four: The new pilgrimage chorale as the finale's *stretta*, accompanied by fragments of itself in the strings and then by a new rhythmic figure (after rehearsal figure L). Note how Tannhäuser joins in neither the chorale melody nor in the accompaniment the others sing to it.



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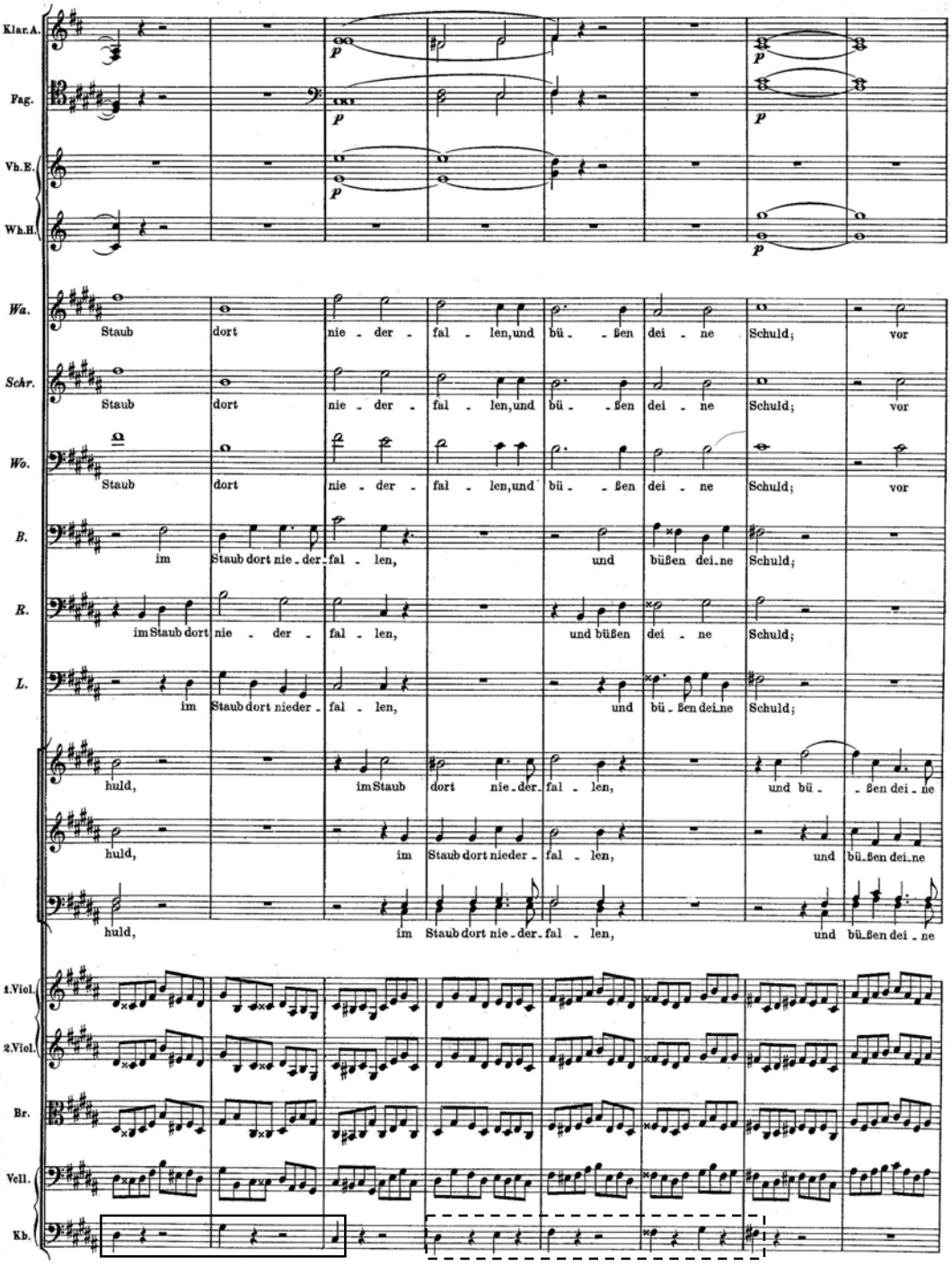
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



cf. chorale (above) inverted

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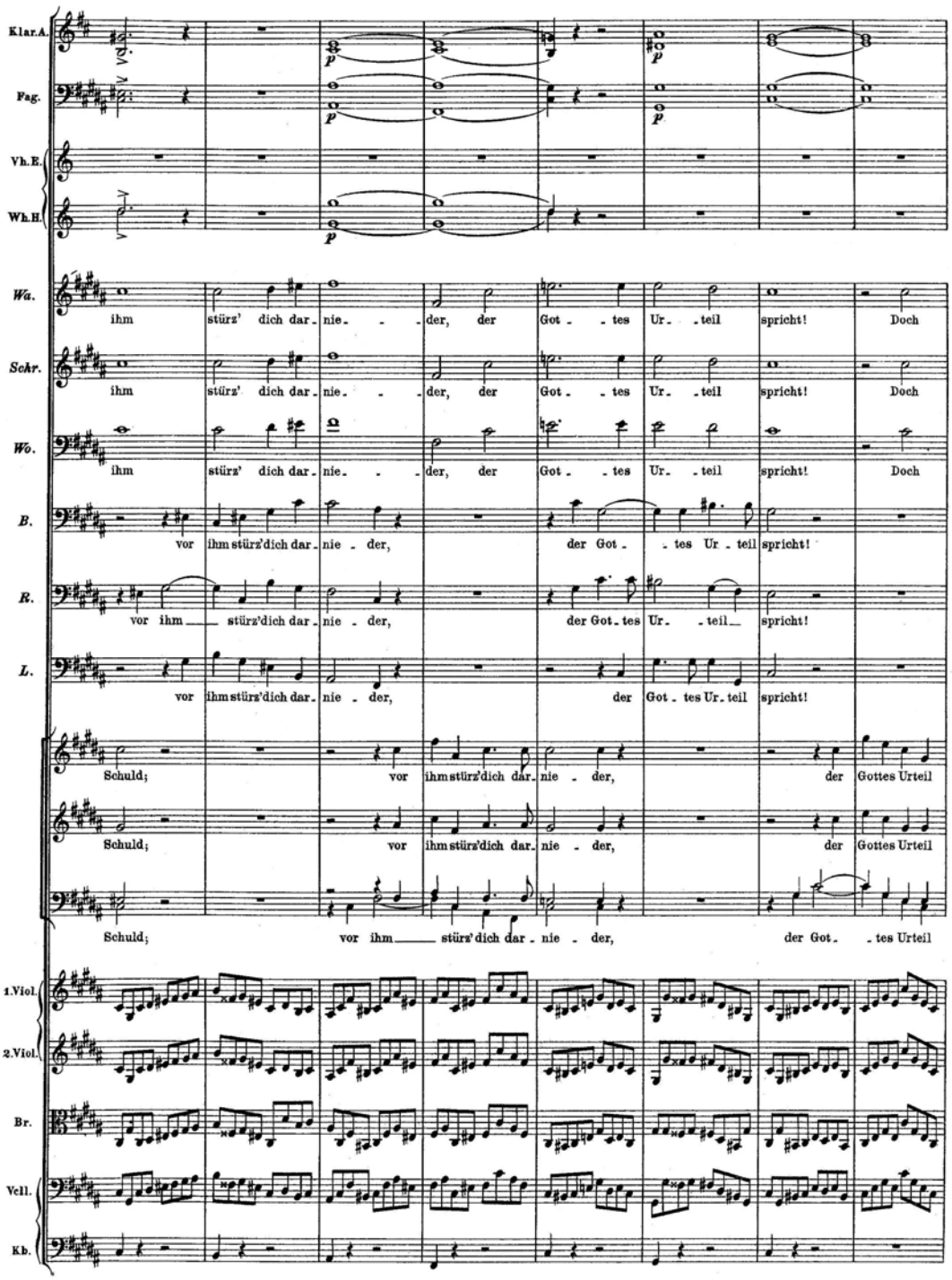
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



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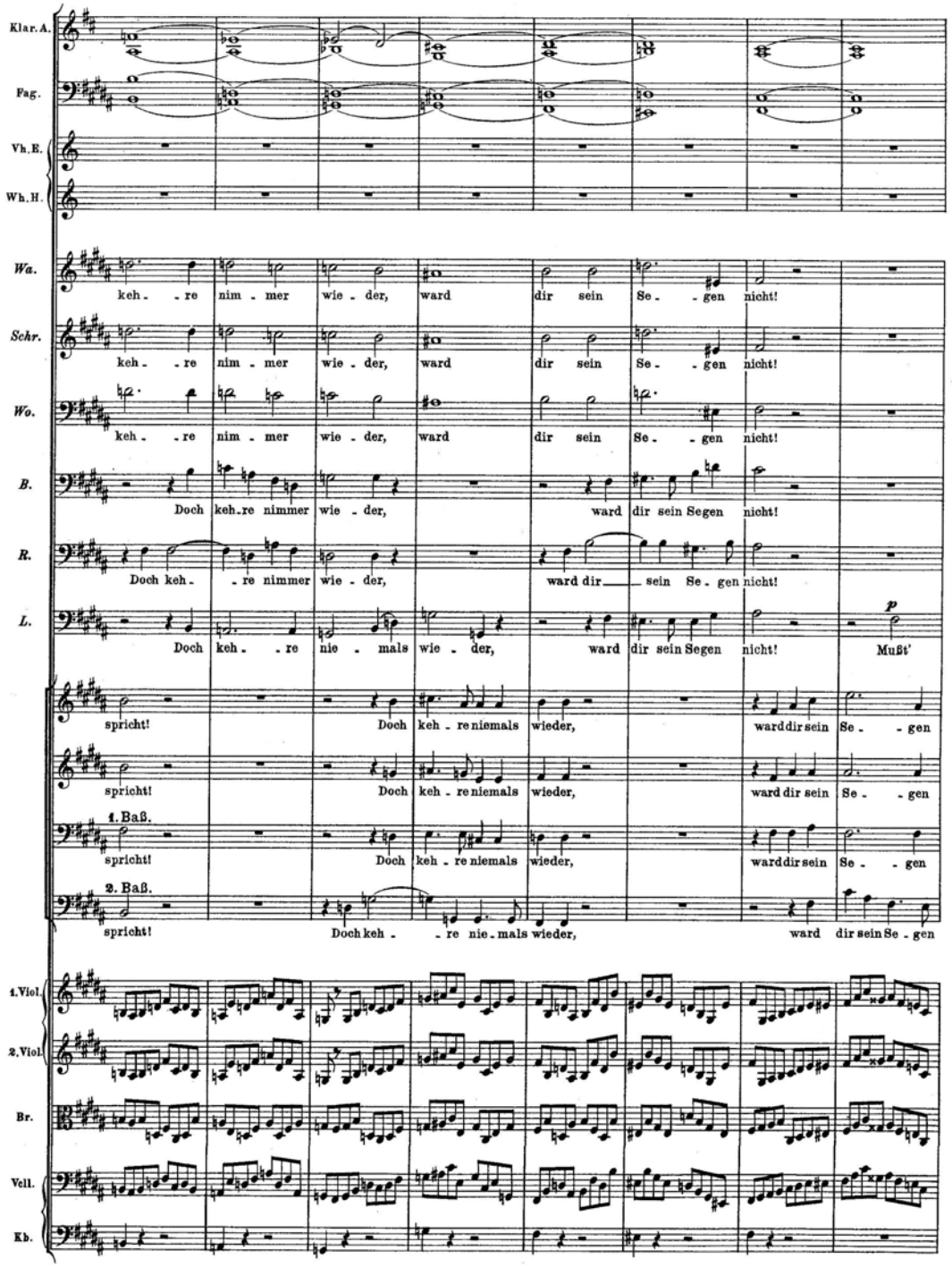
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



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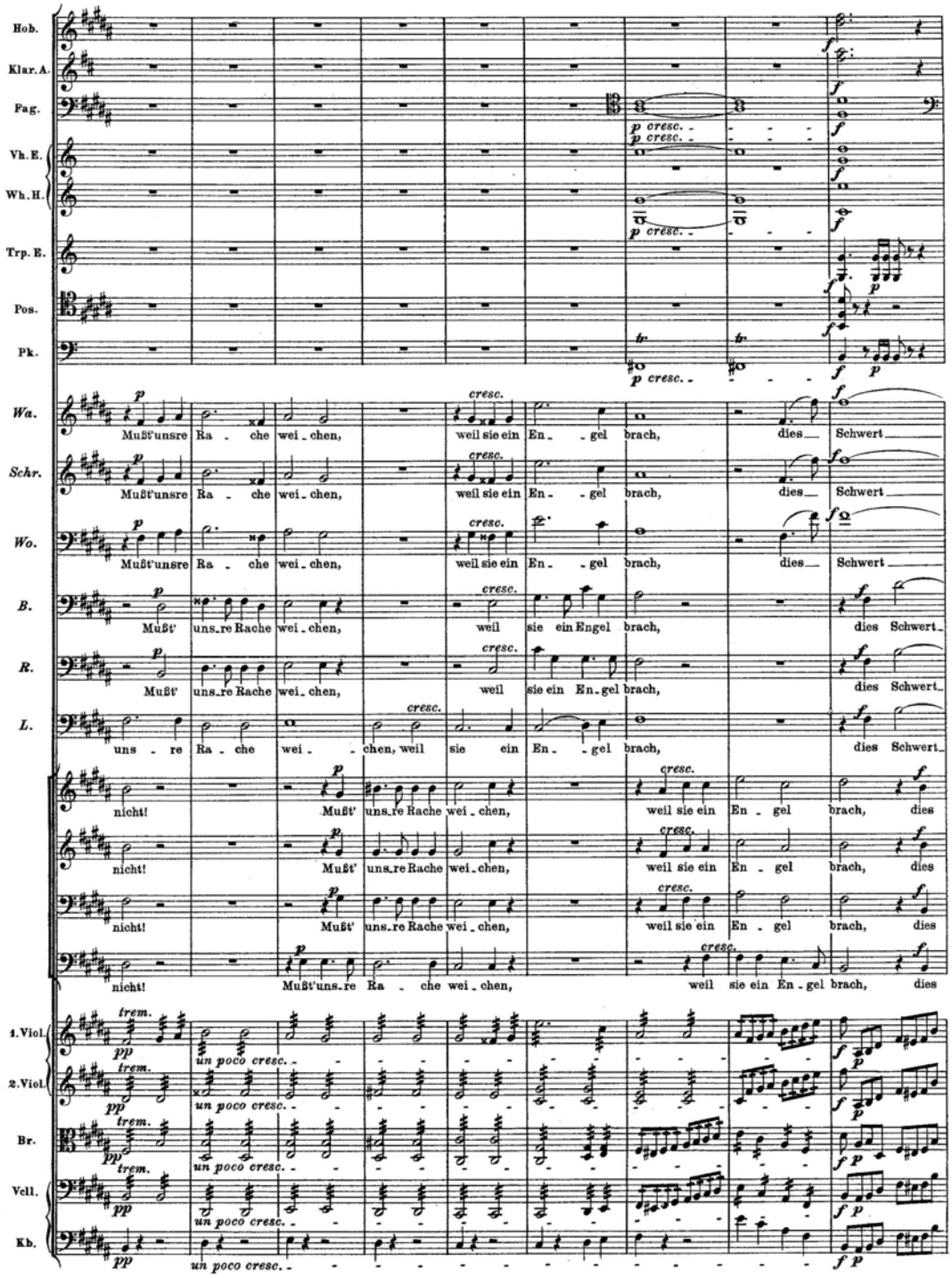
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



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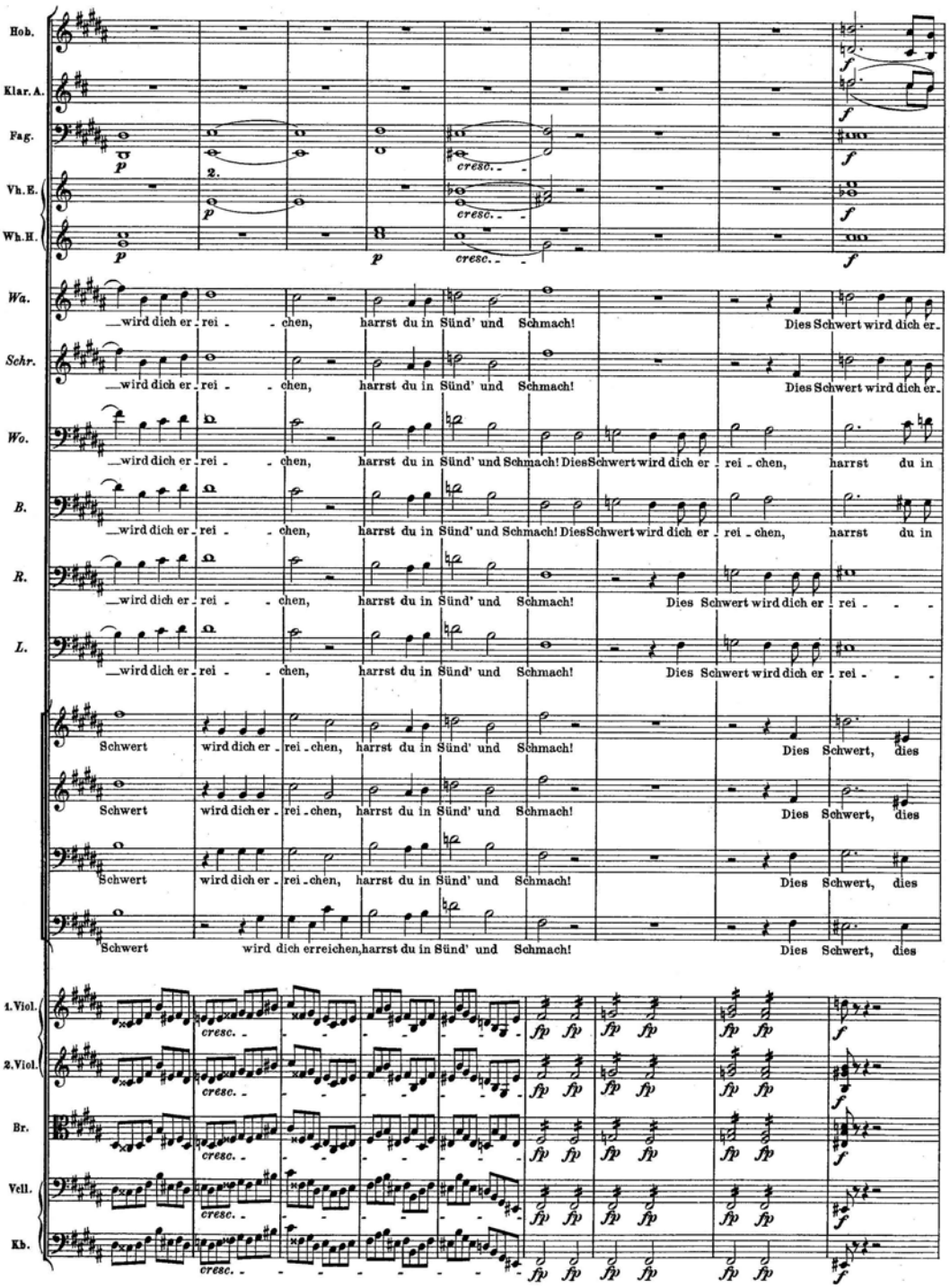
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



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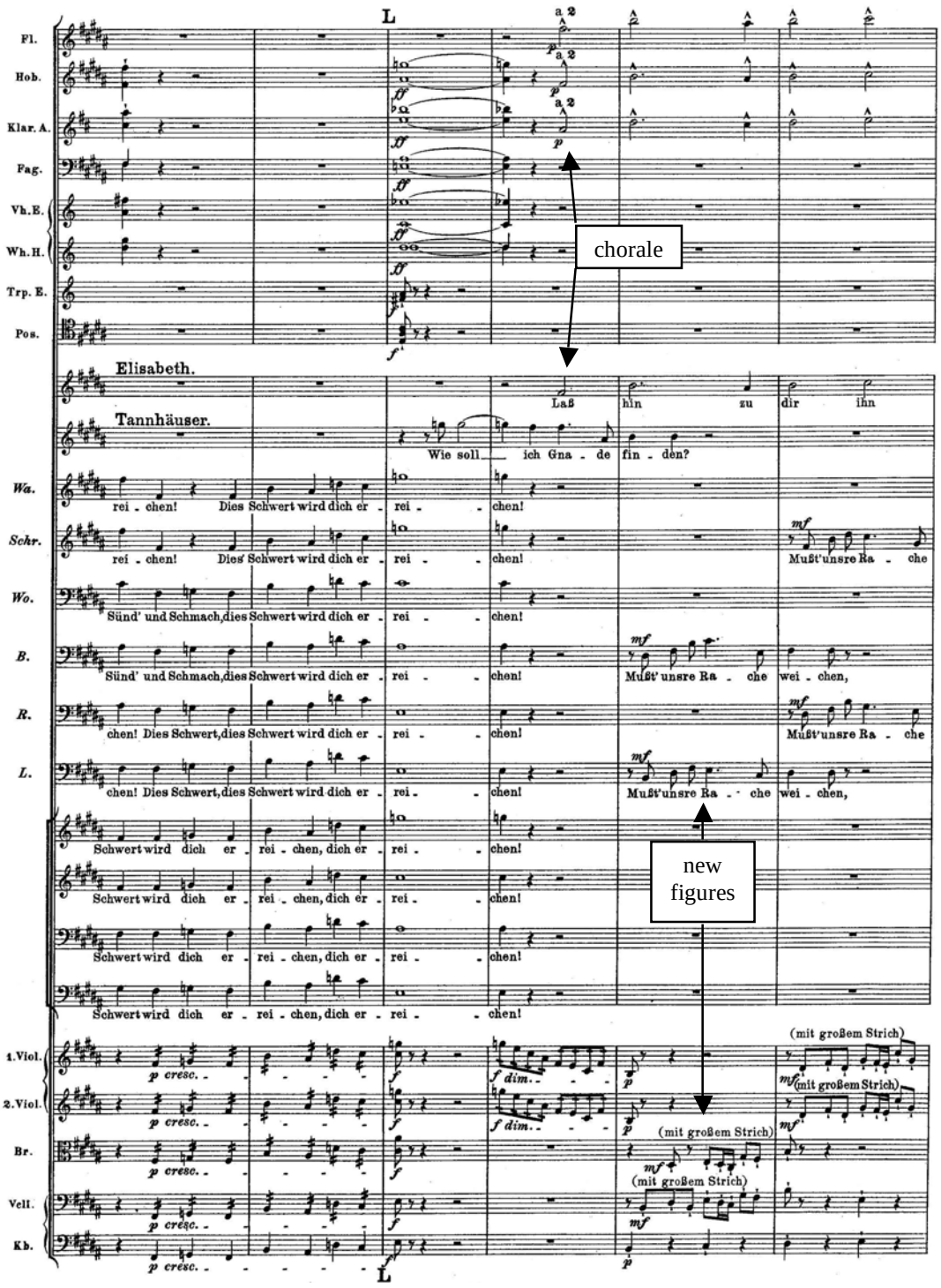
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



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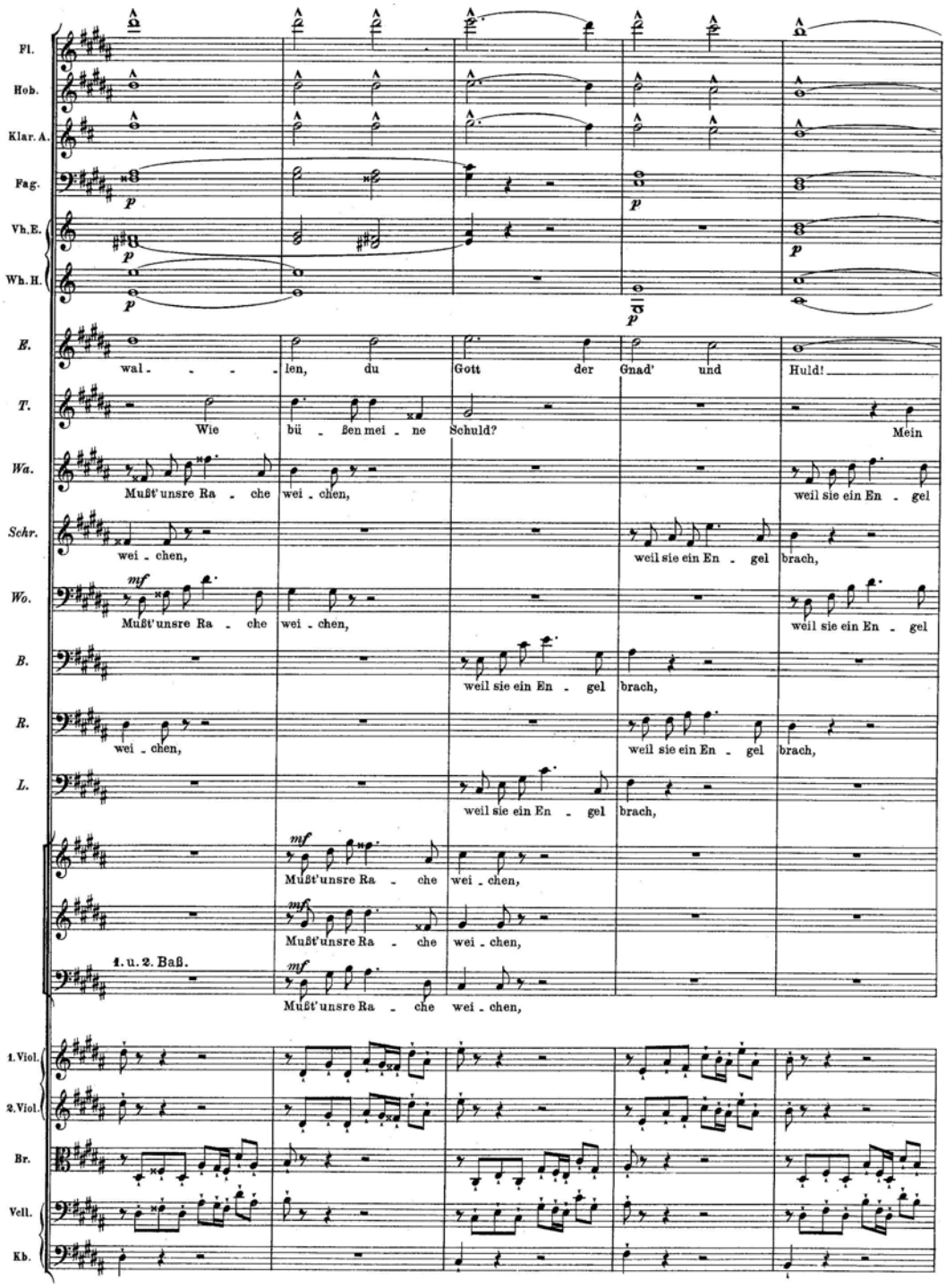
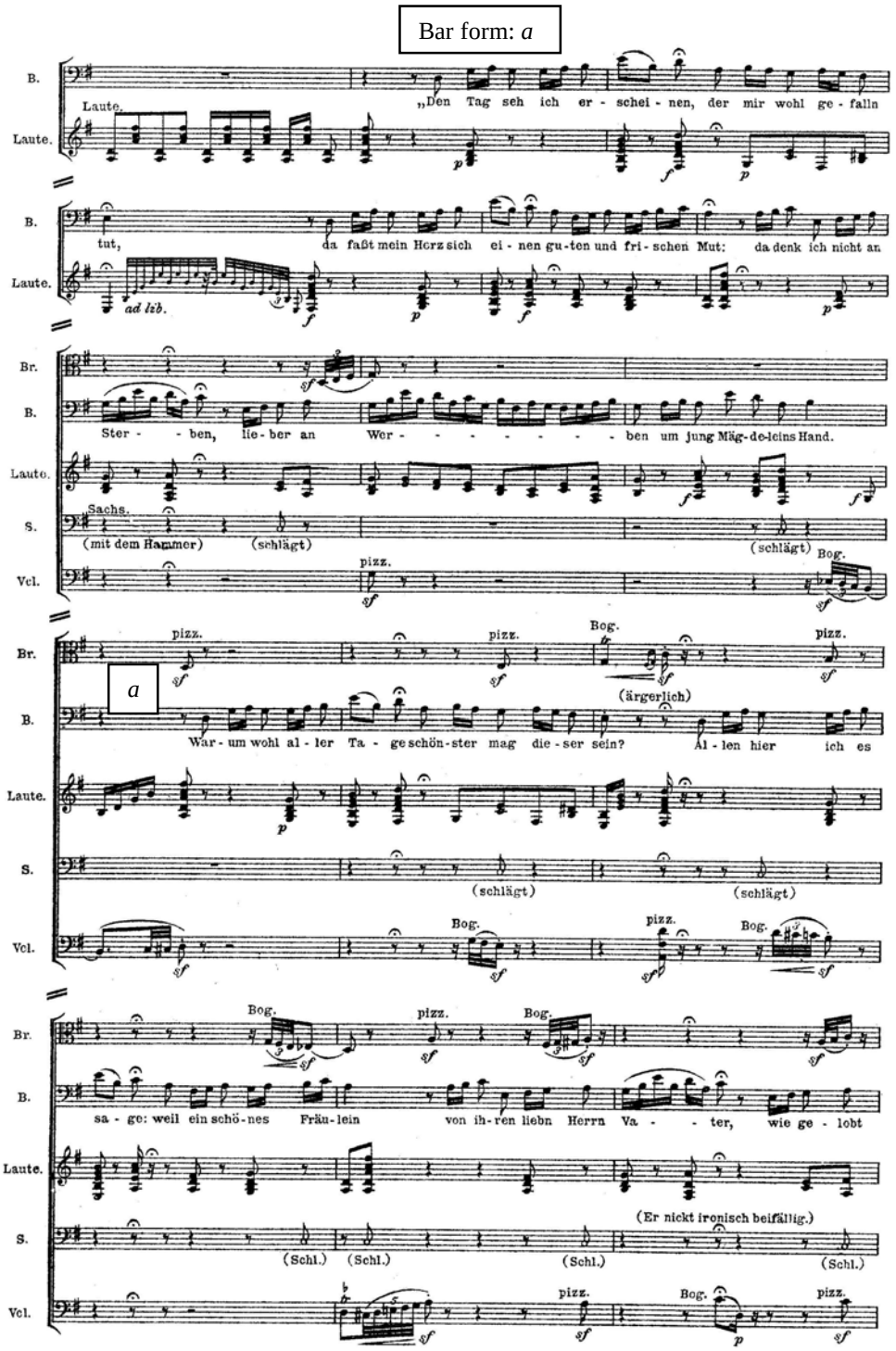
Example 15. *Tannhäuser*, Act Two, Scene Four (continued).



Example 16. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Six: Beckmesser's serenade (second attempt), showing a plethora of what Wagenseil termed "falsche Blumen" but a clear use of Bar form.



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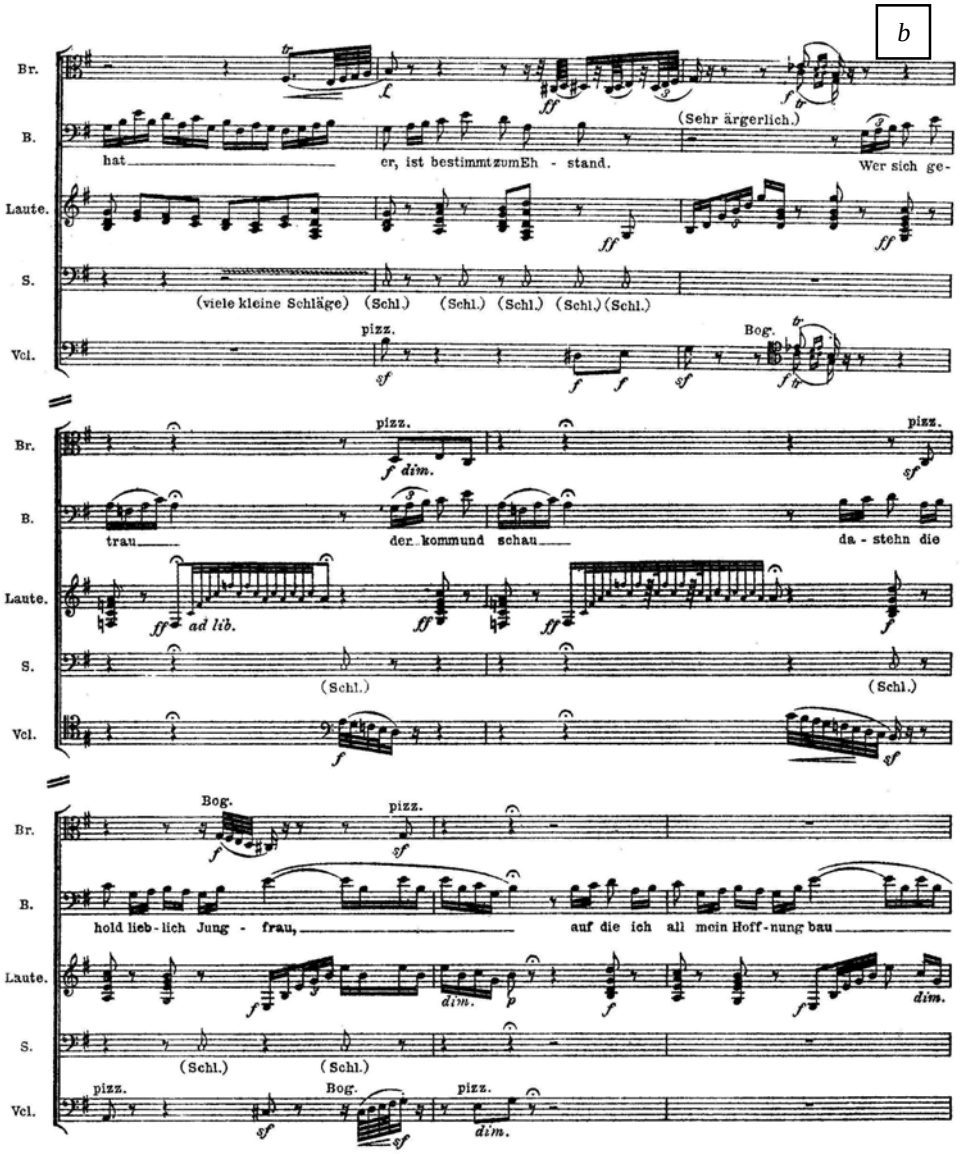
Example 16. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Six (continued).



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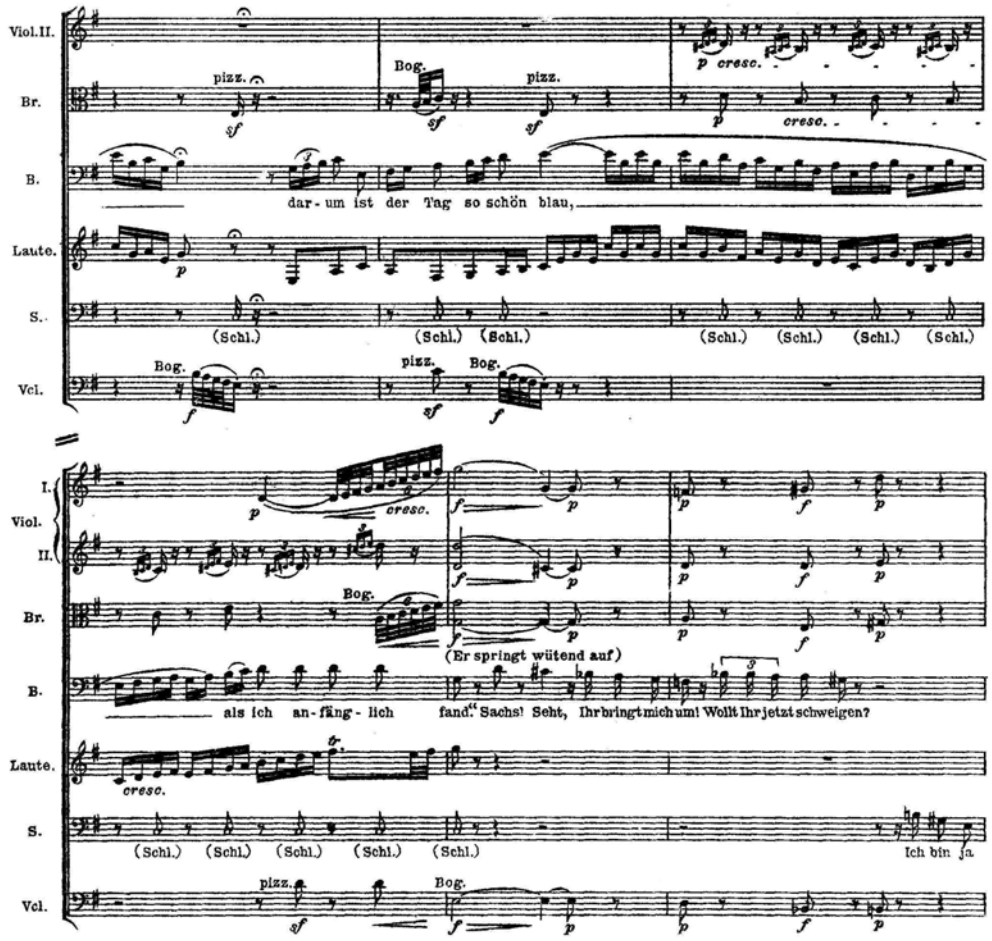
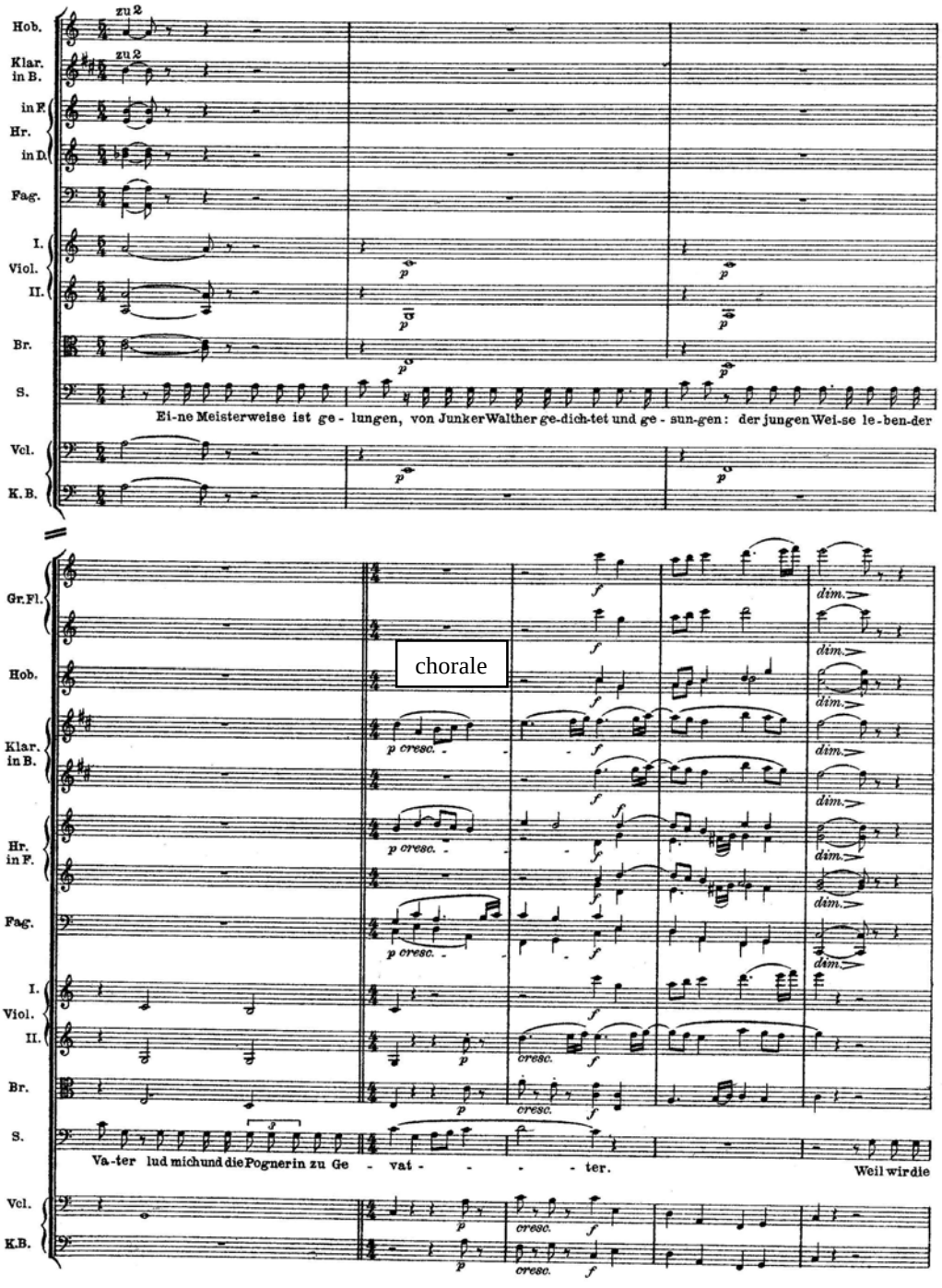
Example 16. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Six (continued).



Example 17. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four: Sachs quotes the recitational style of the *Tabulatur* (cf. Example 10) and reprises the chorale from the opening scene (Example 4).



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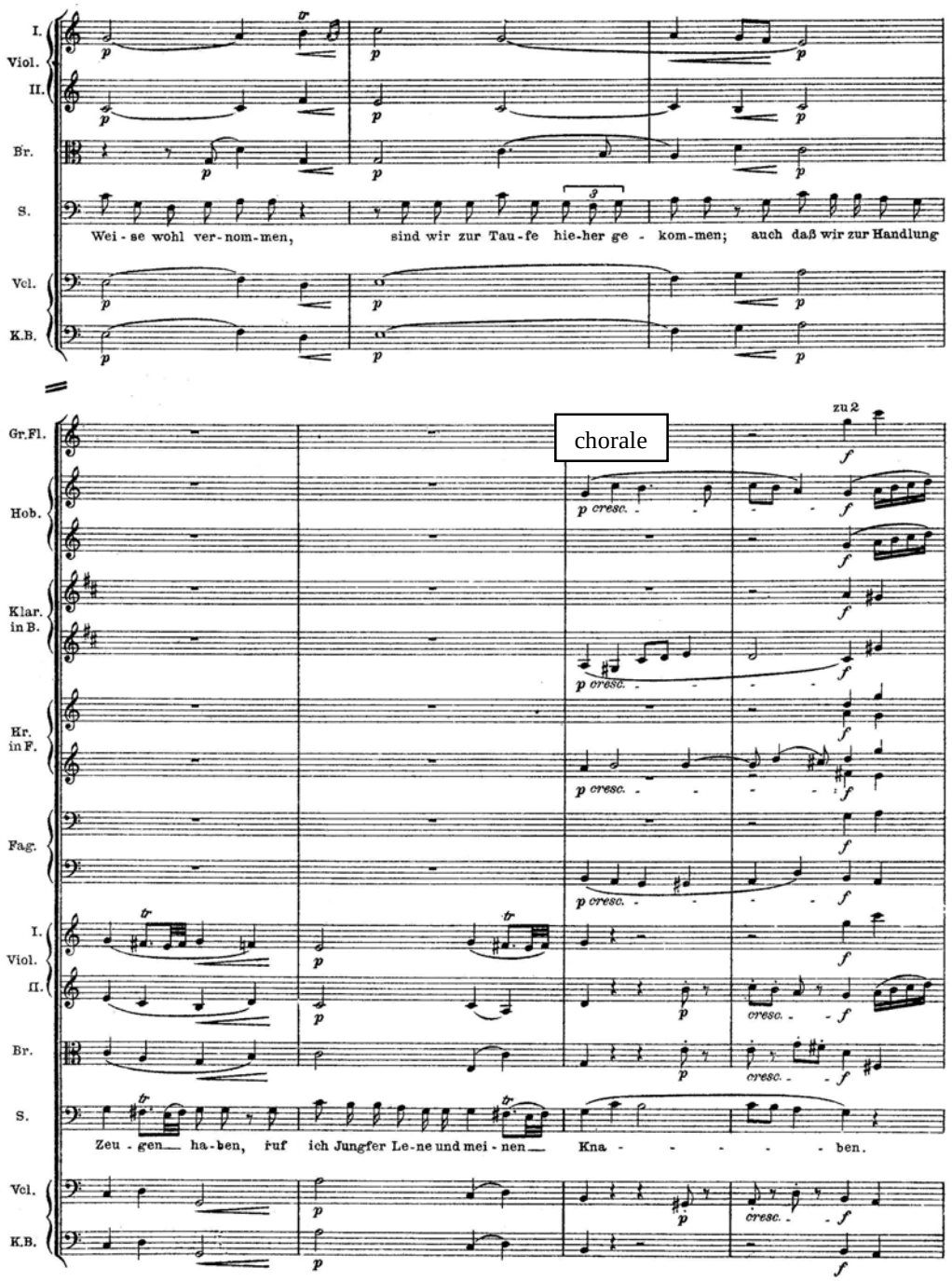
Example 17. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four (continued).



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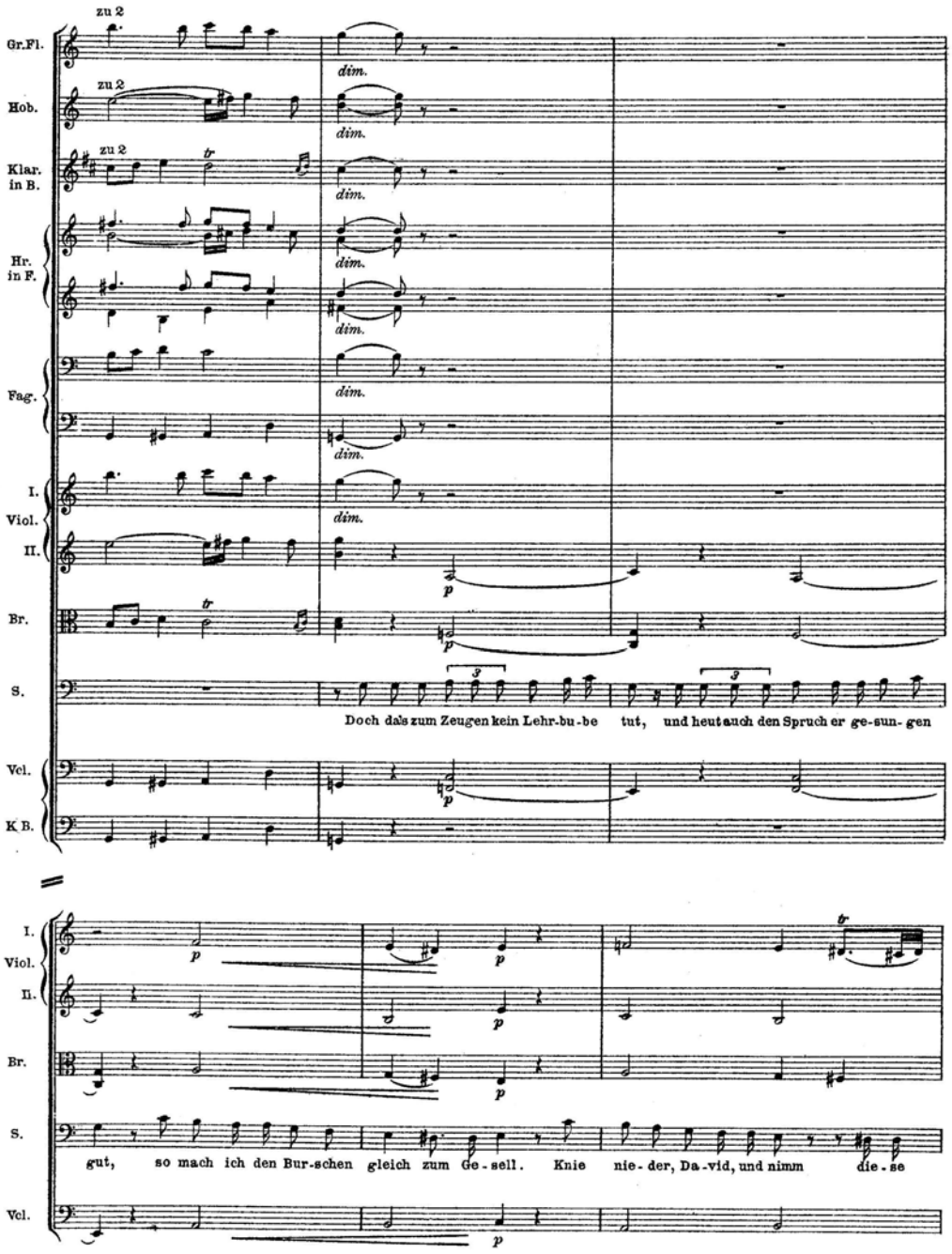
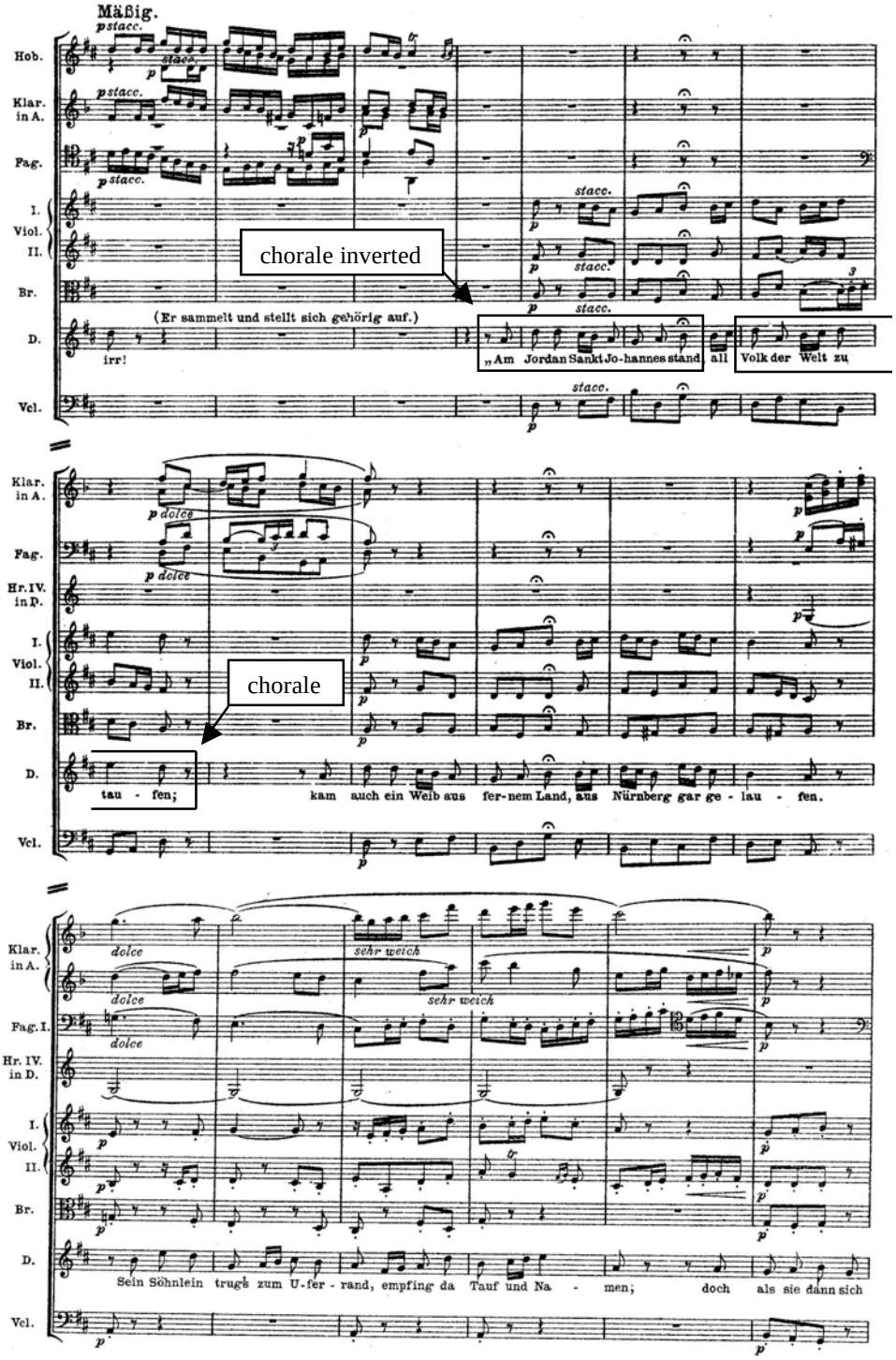
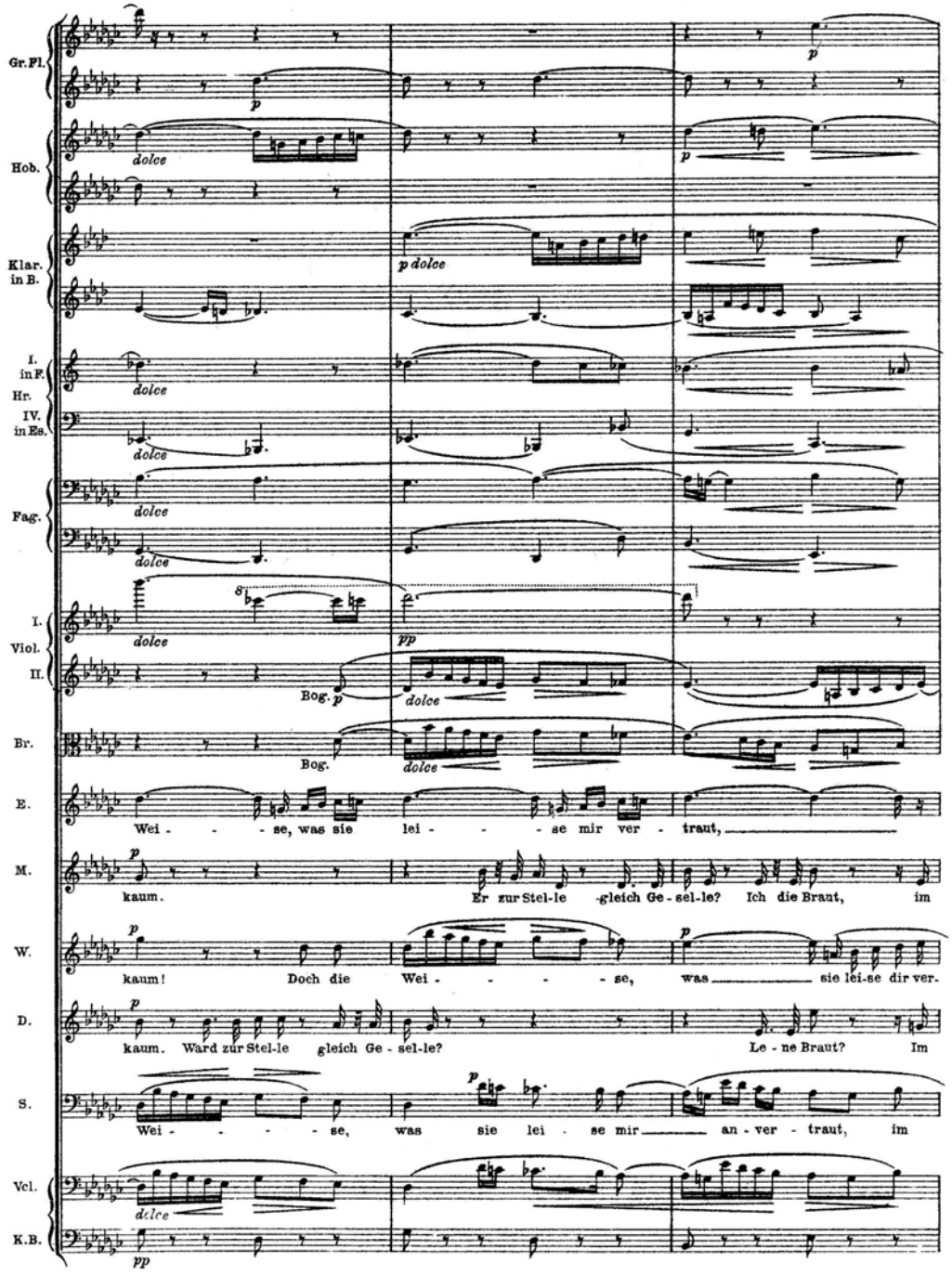
Example 17. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four (continued).



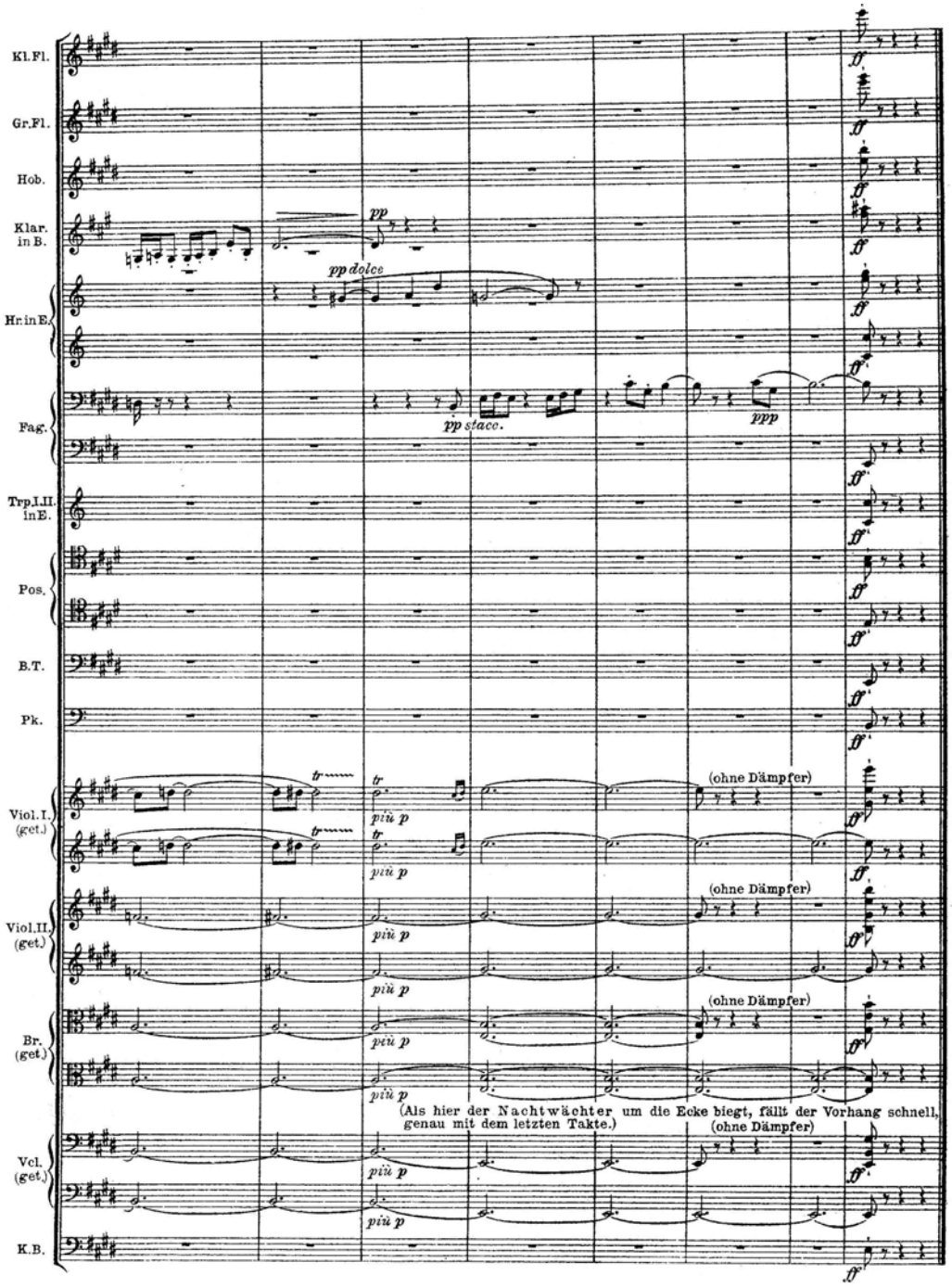
Example 18. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene One: David's *Sprüchlein* with its references to the head motive of the chorale from the opening scene (cf. Example 4) and characteristically archaic-sounding passing tones.



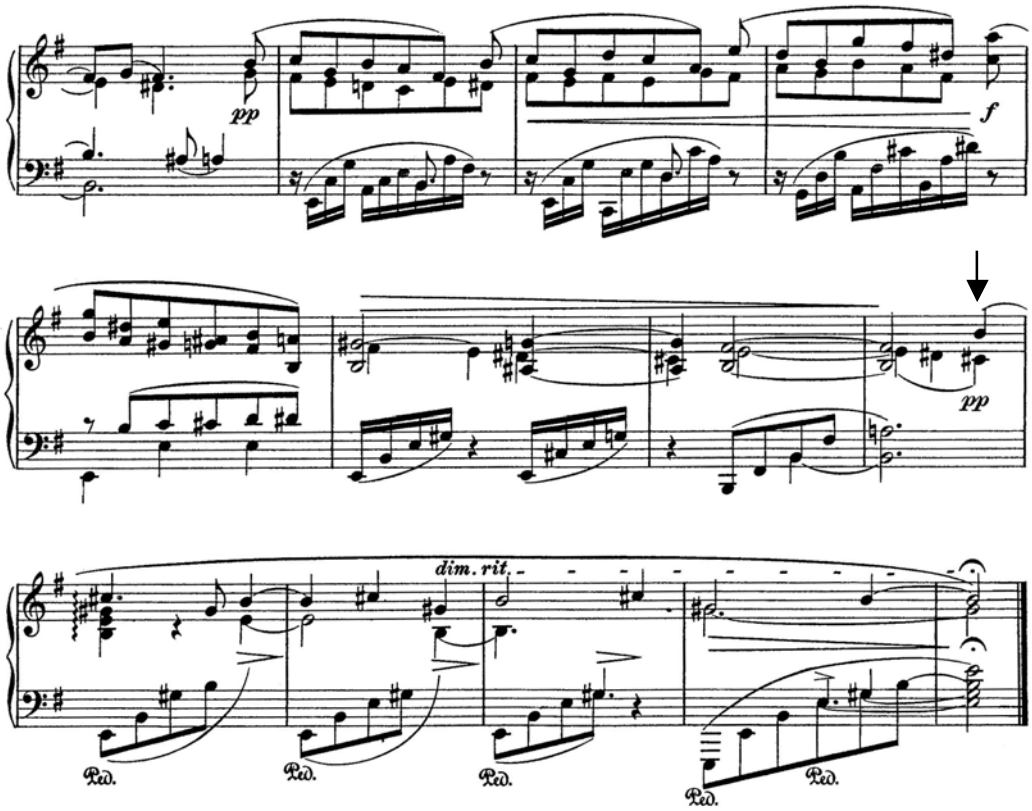
Example 19. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four: Florid singing in the quintet, a rare Wagnerian ensemble. Note the highly ornamented word "Weise" ("tune").



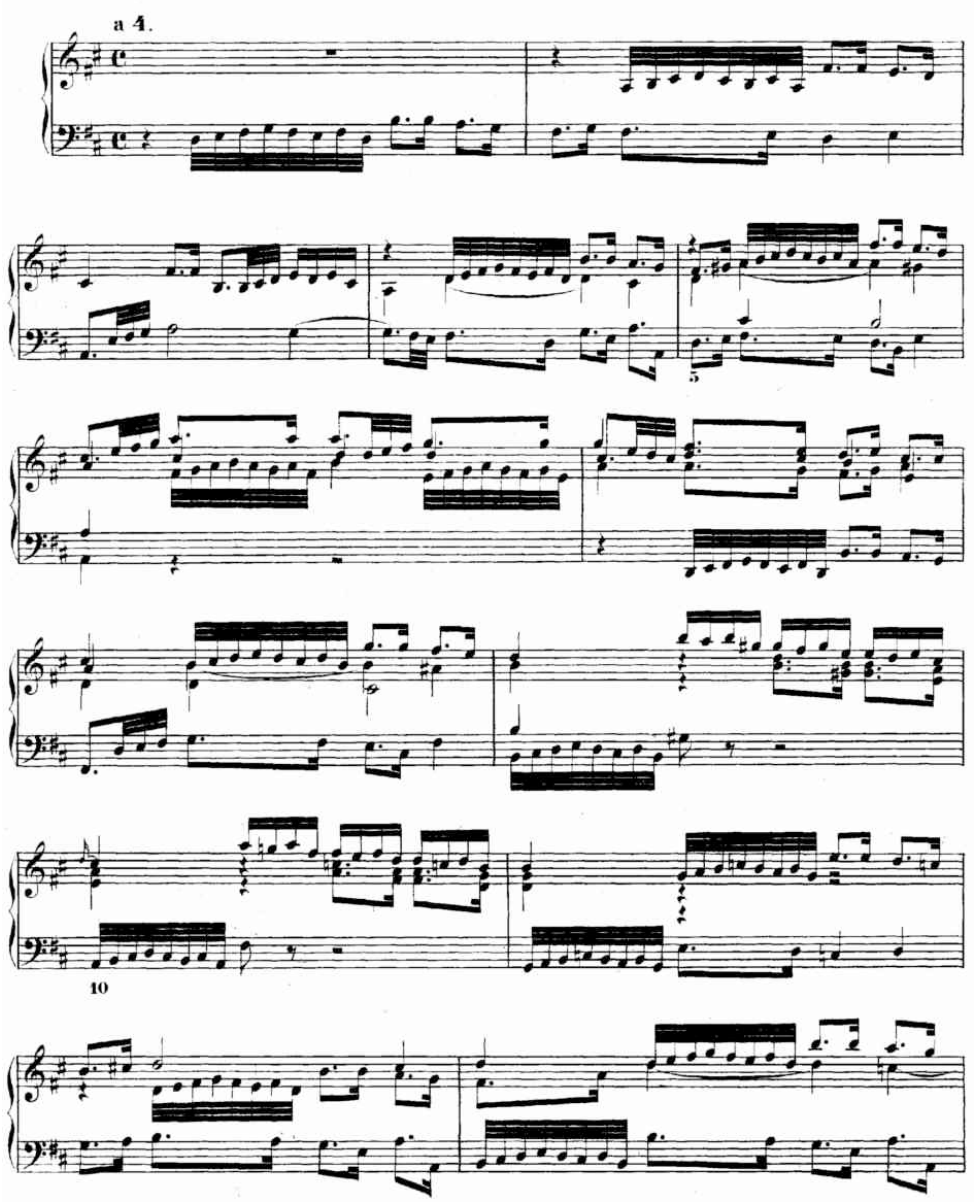
Example 20a. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene Seven: Fragments from Beckmesser's serenade (Example 16) in the woodwinds accompany the Night watchman's exit and the curtain.



Example 20b. Johannes Brahms, *Vier Klavierstücke*, No. 2 “Intermezzo,” op. 119 (published 1893): In the coda Brahms recreates the end of Act Two of *Meistersinger* using the same key.



Example 21. Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Fuga V in D Major, BWV 850: Wagner "calls it the 'Mayor' and says the figuration should arouse a feeling of trepidation; the countertheme he calls the 'Mayoress,' and to the concluding bars he sings the words 'My will has been done.'" Note the pervasive dotted rhythms as well.



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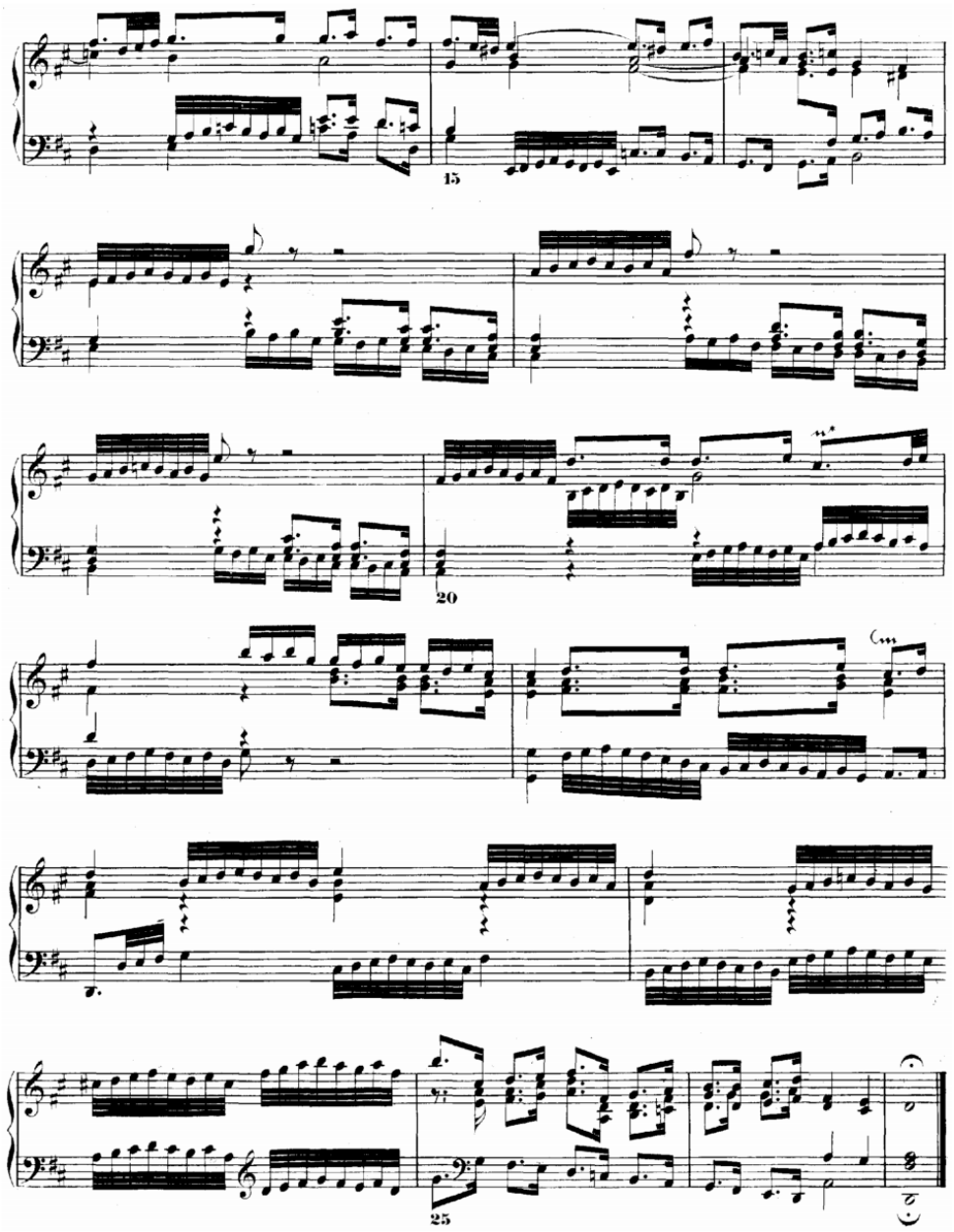
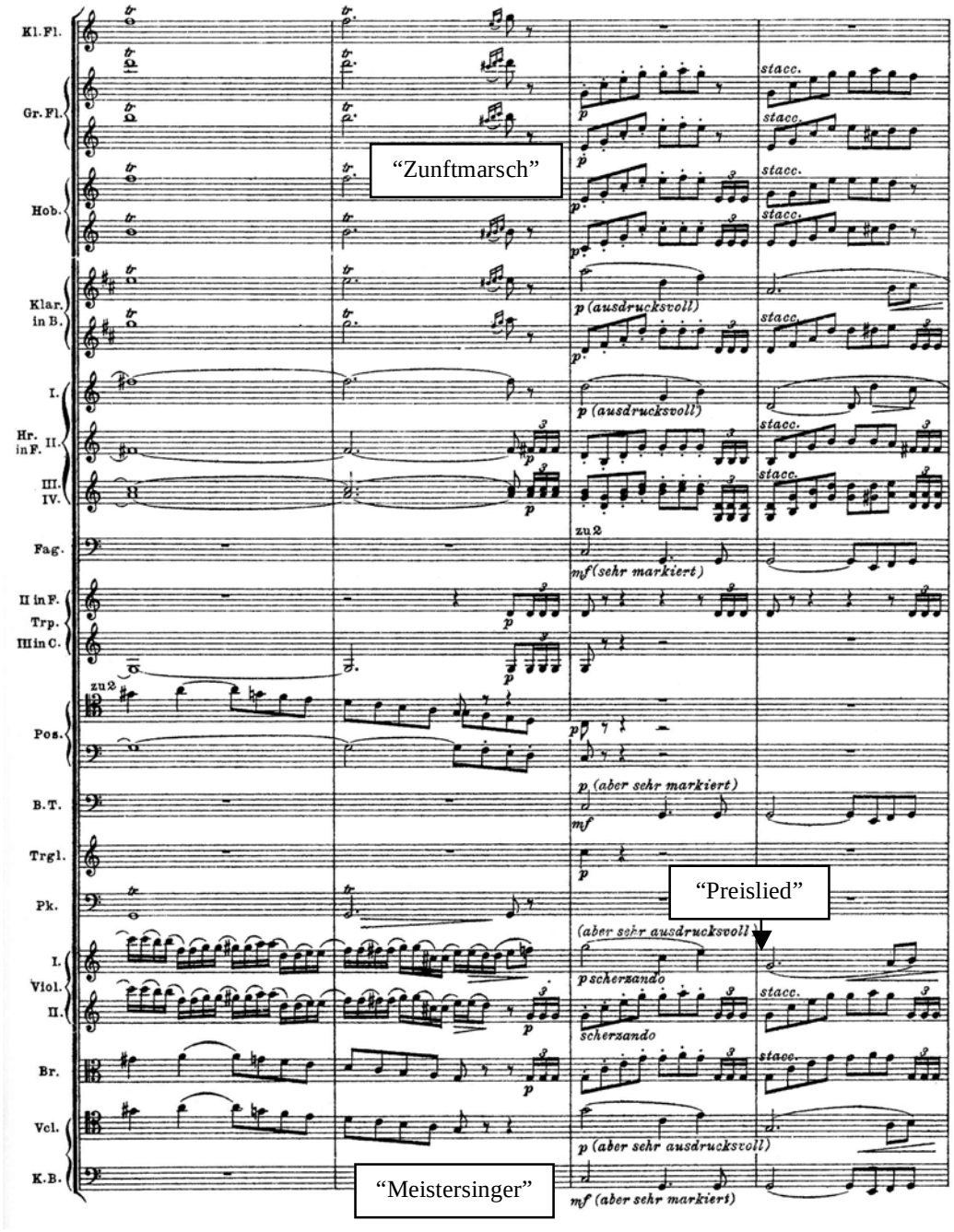
Example 21. Bach, *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Fuga V in D Major, BWV 850 (continued).



Example 22. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Prelude: "applied Bach" with various themes piled up on top of each other in counterpoint. The "Preislied" is the main melody, with the "Guild" ("Zunftmarsch") as accompaniment, over the "Meistersinger" theme in the bass.



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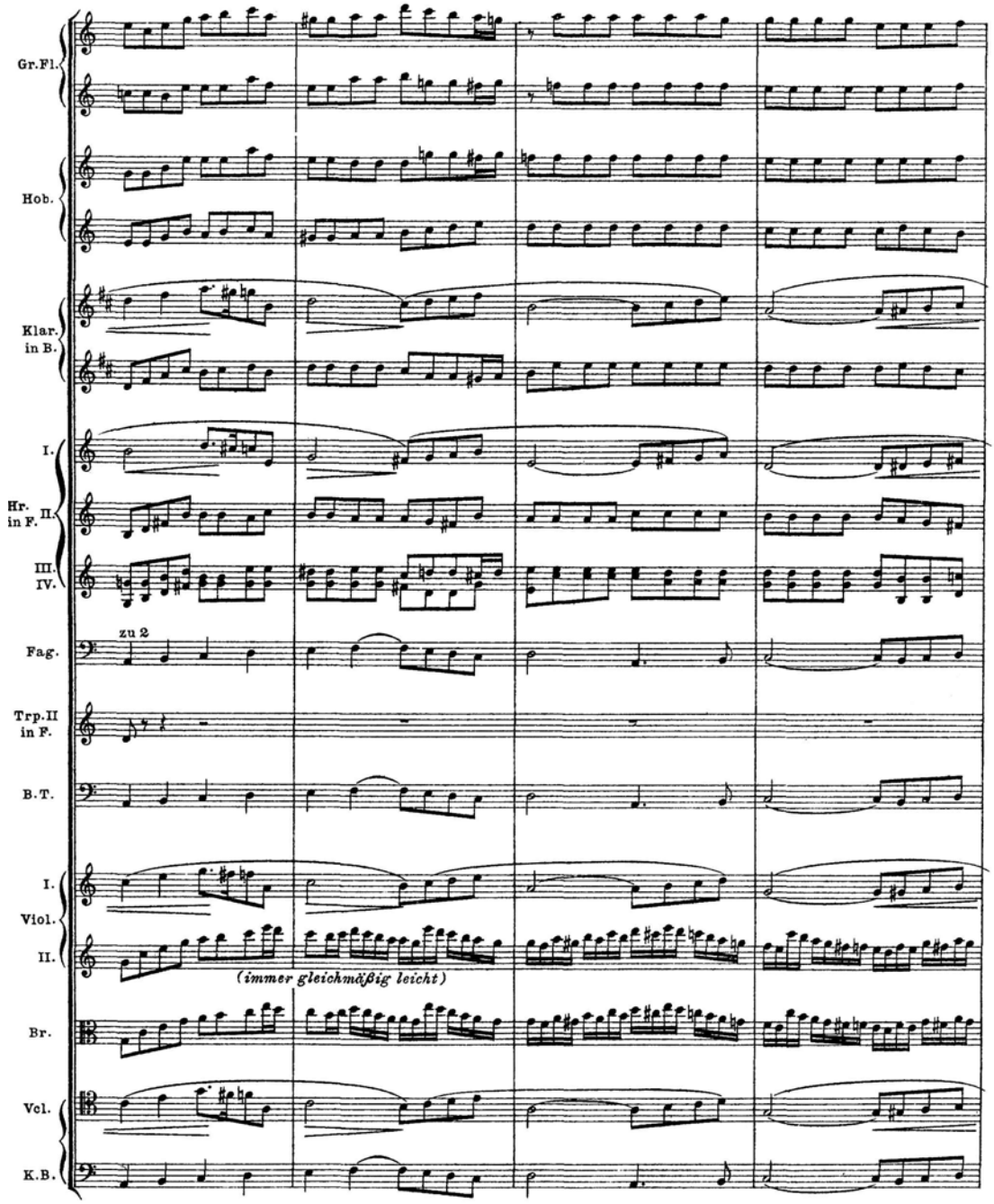
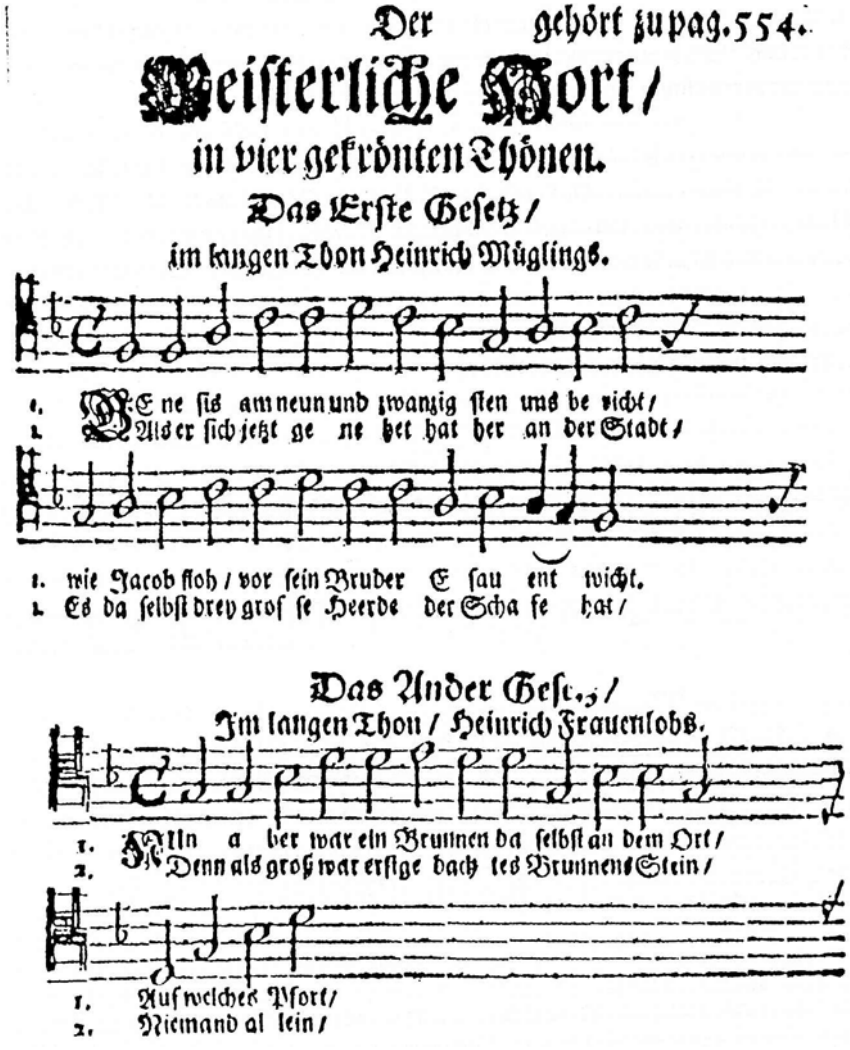
Example 22. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Prelude (continued).

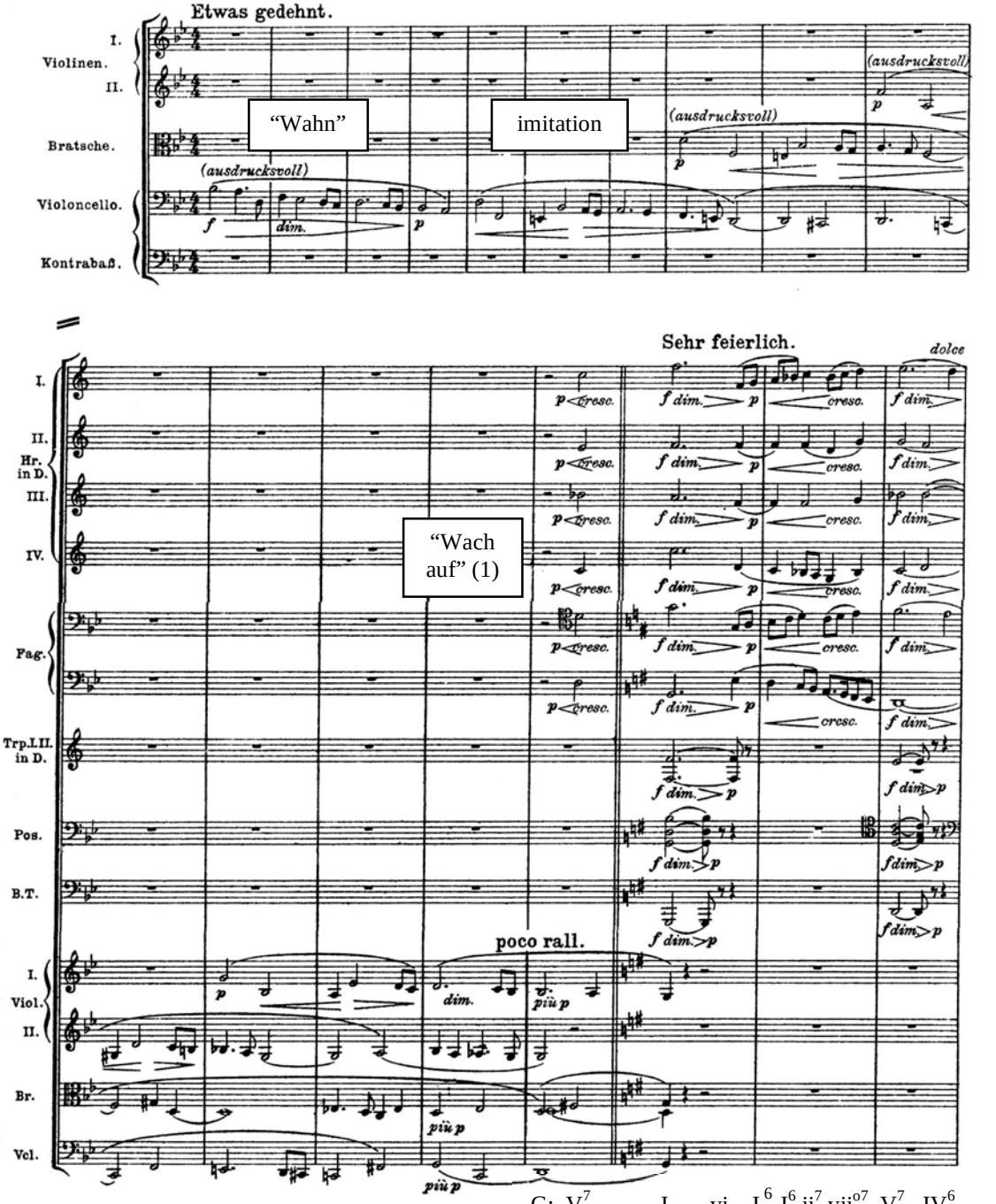


Example 23. Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Von der Meister-Singer holdseligen Kunst*, appendix to p. 554: "Das erste Gesetz im langen Thon Heinrich Müglings" and "Das ander Gesetz in langen Thon Heinrich Frauenlobs." This page is the source for the "Zunftmarsch" in *Die Meistersinger*.[2]

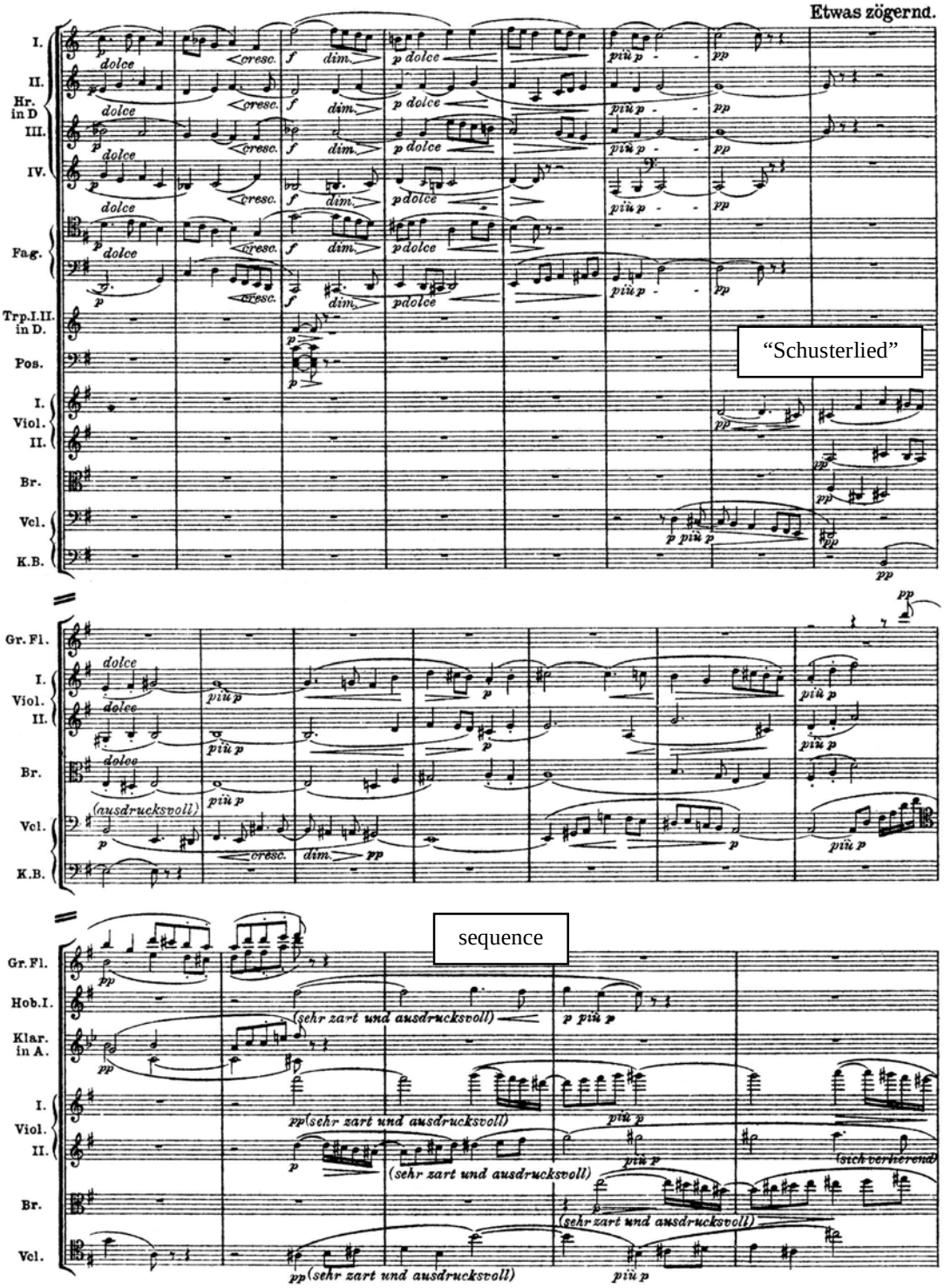


[2] Reproduced from Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 50.

Example 24. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Prelude: The opening "Wahn" motive concludes with imitation based on its second phrase. The "Wach auf" hymn is in an archaic-sounding style with odd harmonic touches. Sequential writing using material from Act Two recalls Bach's Prelude in C-sharp minor, BWV 849 (cf. Example 25a below).



Example 24. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Prelude (continued).



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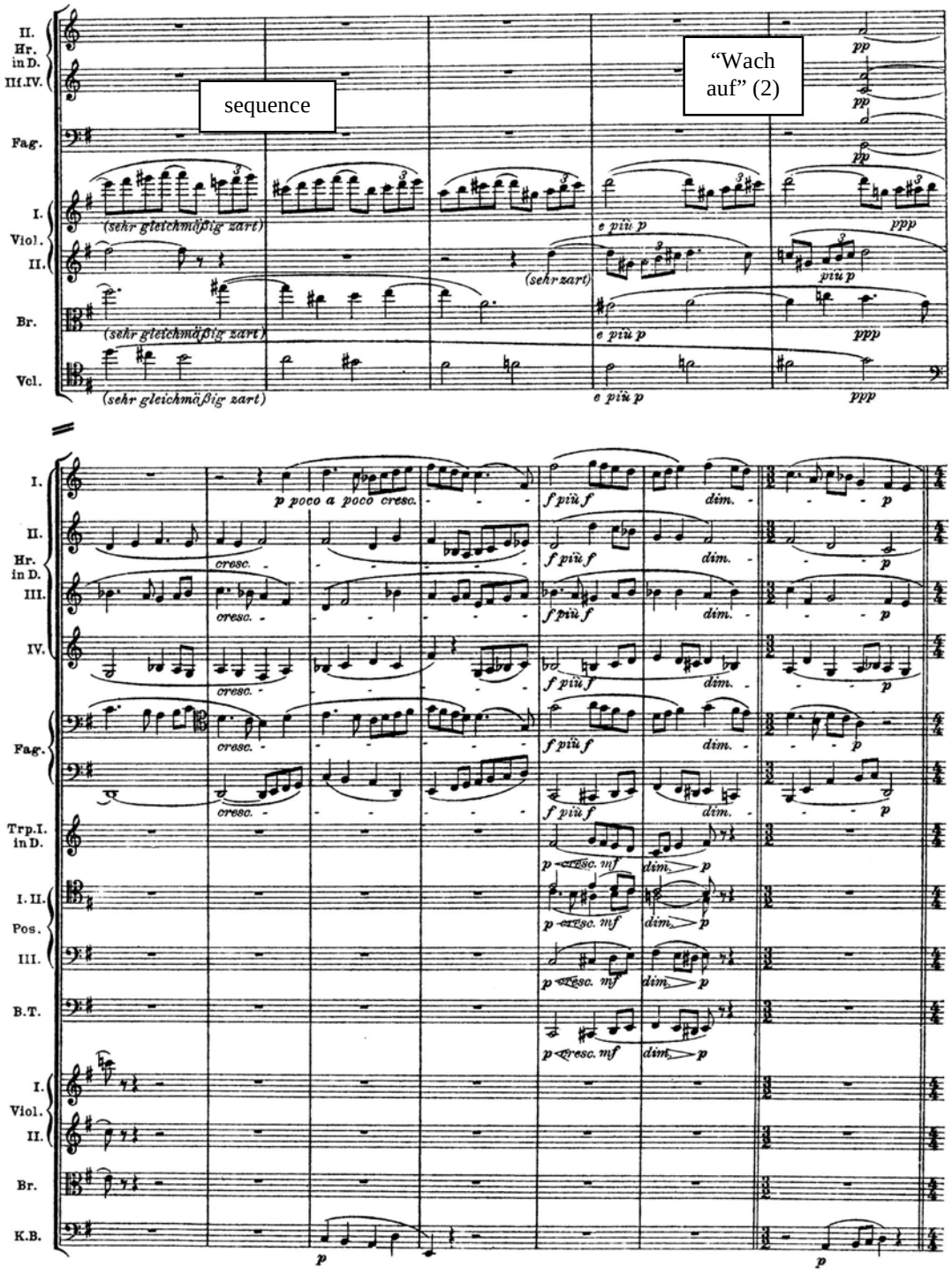
Example 24. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Prelude (continued).



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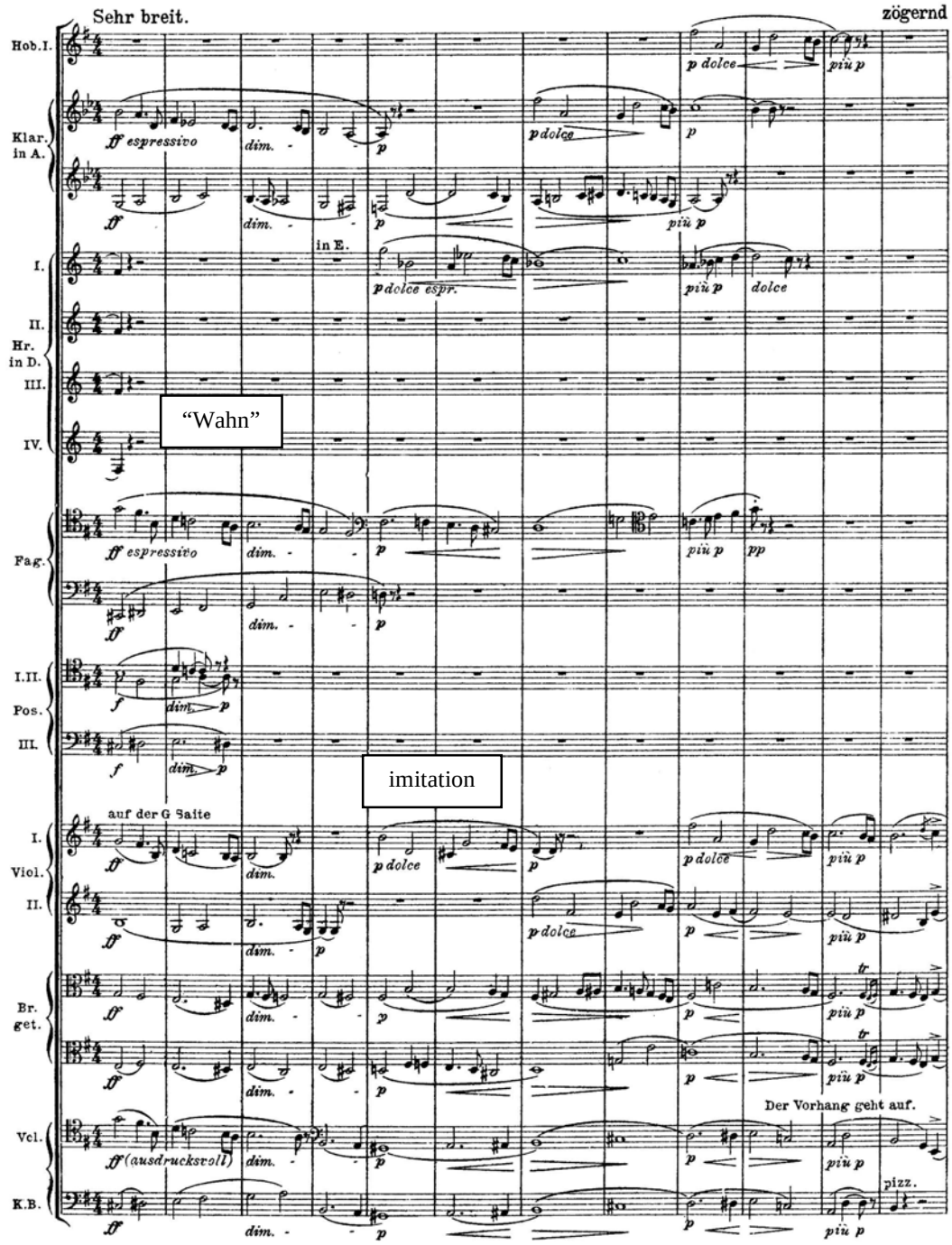
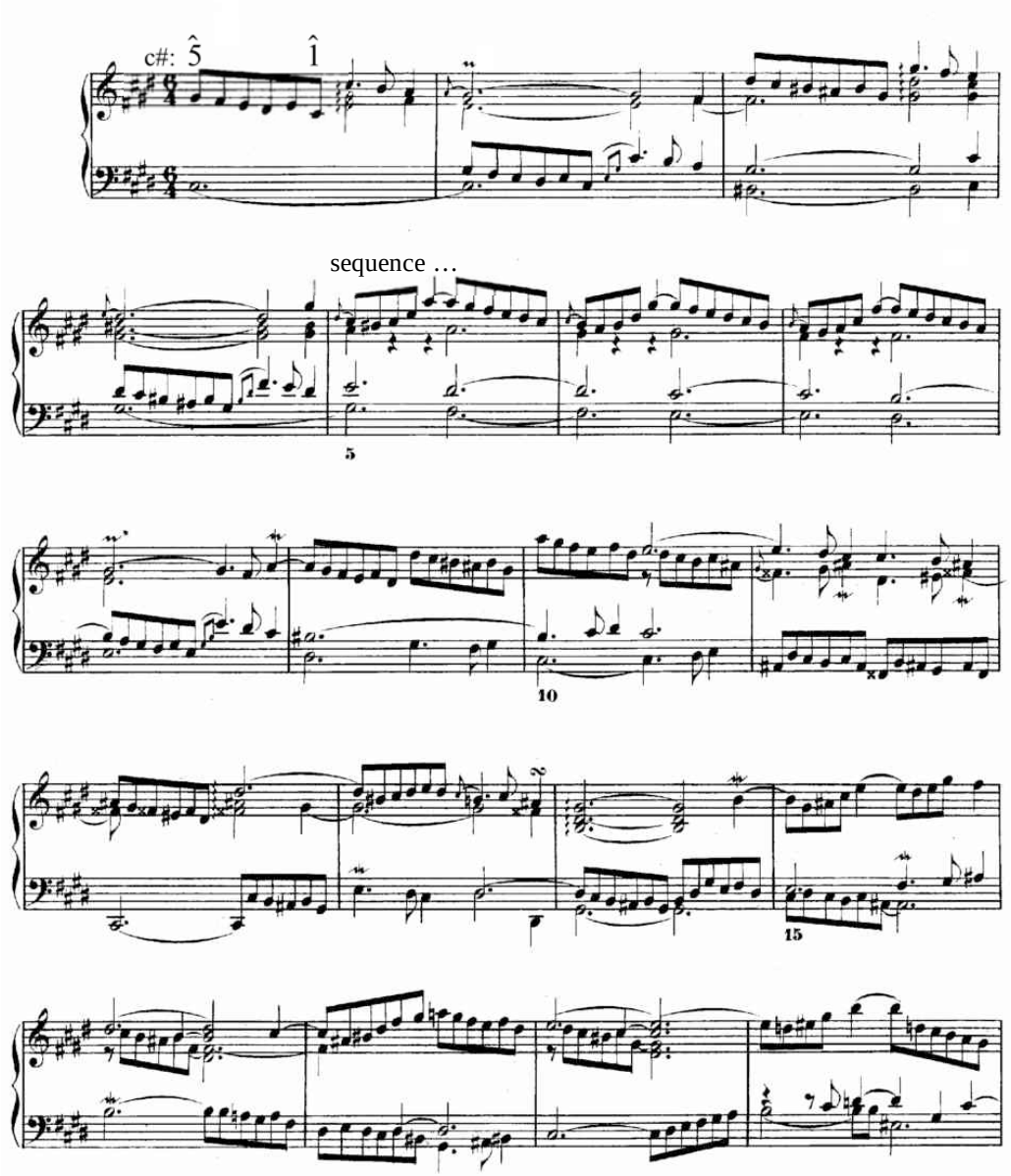
Example 24. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Prelude (continued).

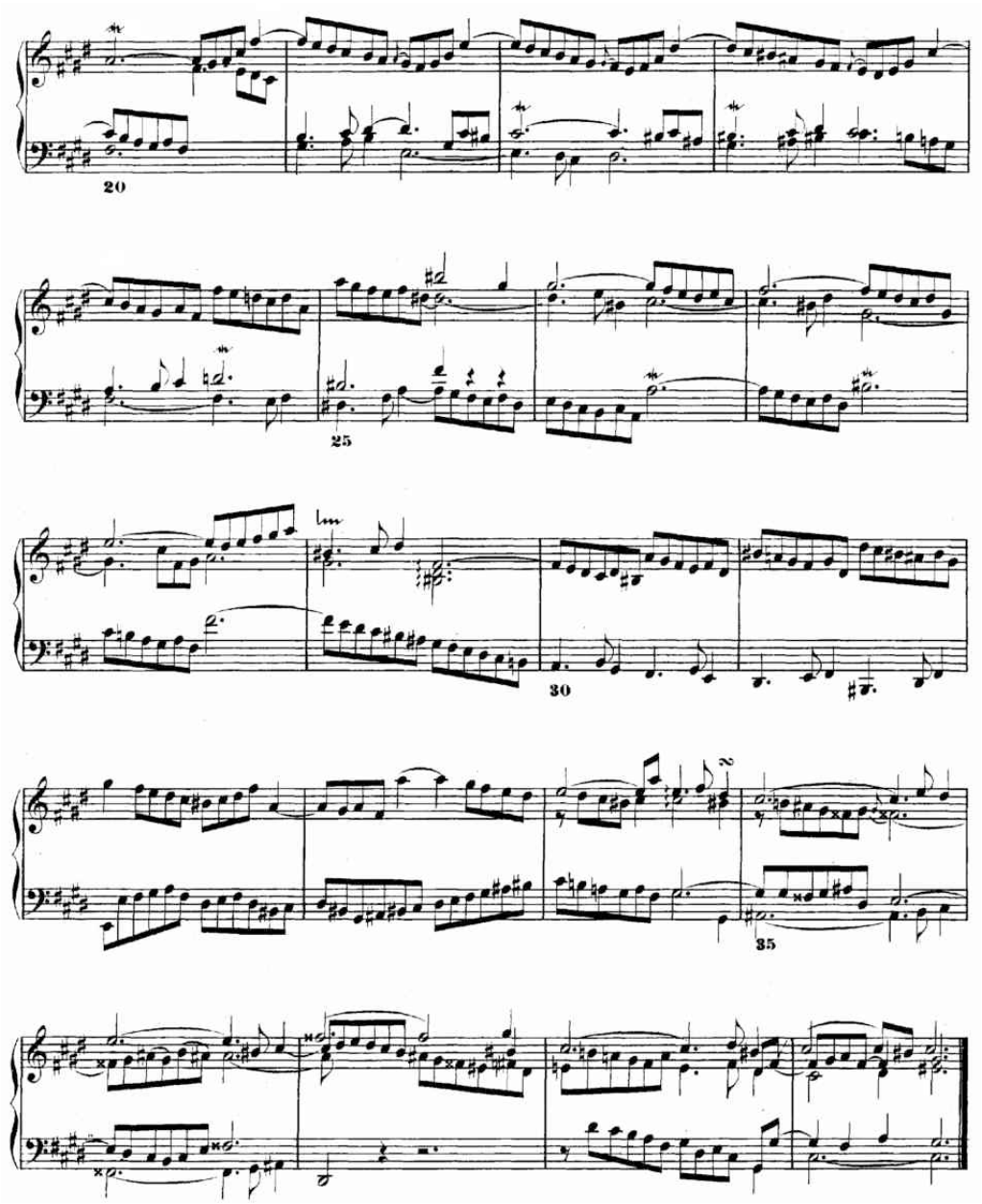


Example 25a. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier I*, Praeludium IV in C-sharp minor, BWV 849: "R. says he has been composing it himself ever since his childhood …" Note the opening descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ and the sequential material in the treble (beginning mm. 5ff.).

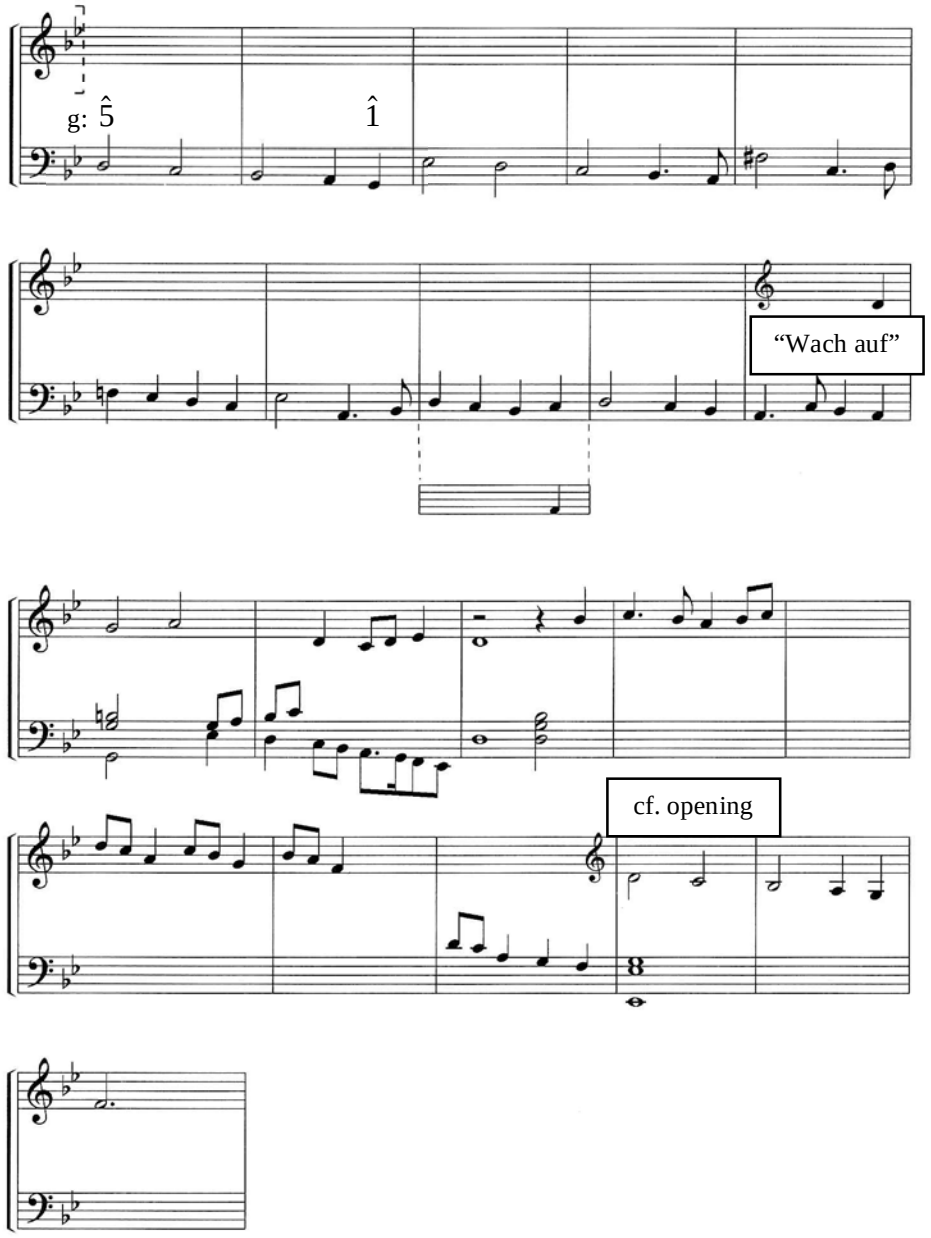


continues

Example 25a. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier I*, Praeludium IV in C-sharp minor, BWV 849 (continued).

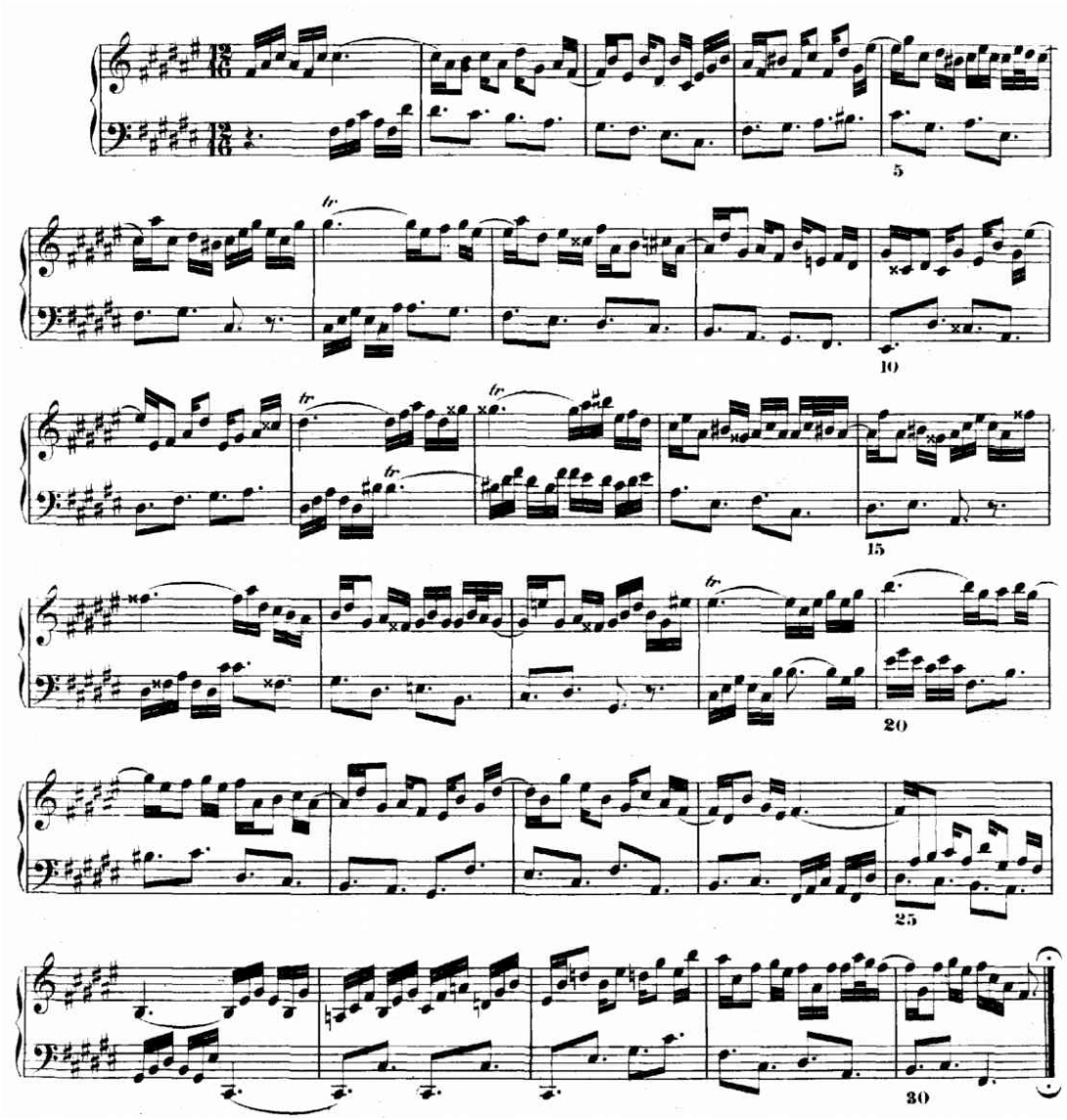


Example 25b. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Prelude (original sketch [22 May 1862]):[3] note the opening descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$, echoing BWV 849. Compare this scalar material with the imitated motive in the final version (Example 24, mm. 5ff.). Also, note the lack of an interlude in the "Wach auf" hymn at this early stage.

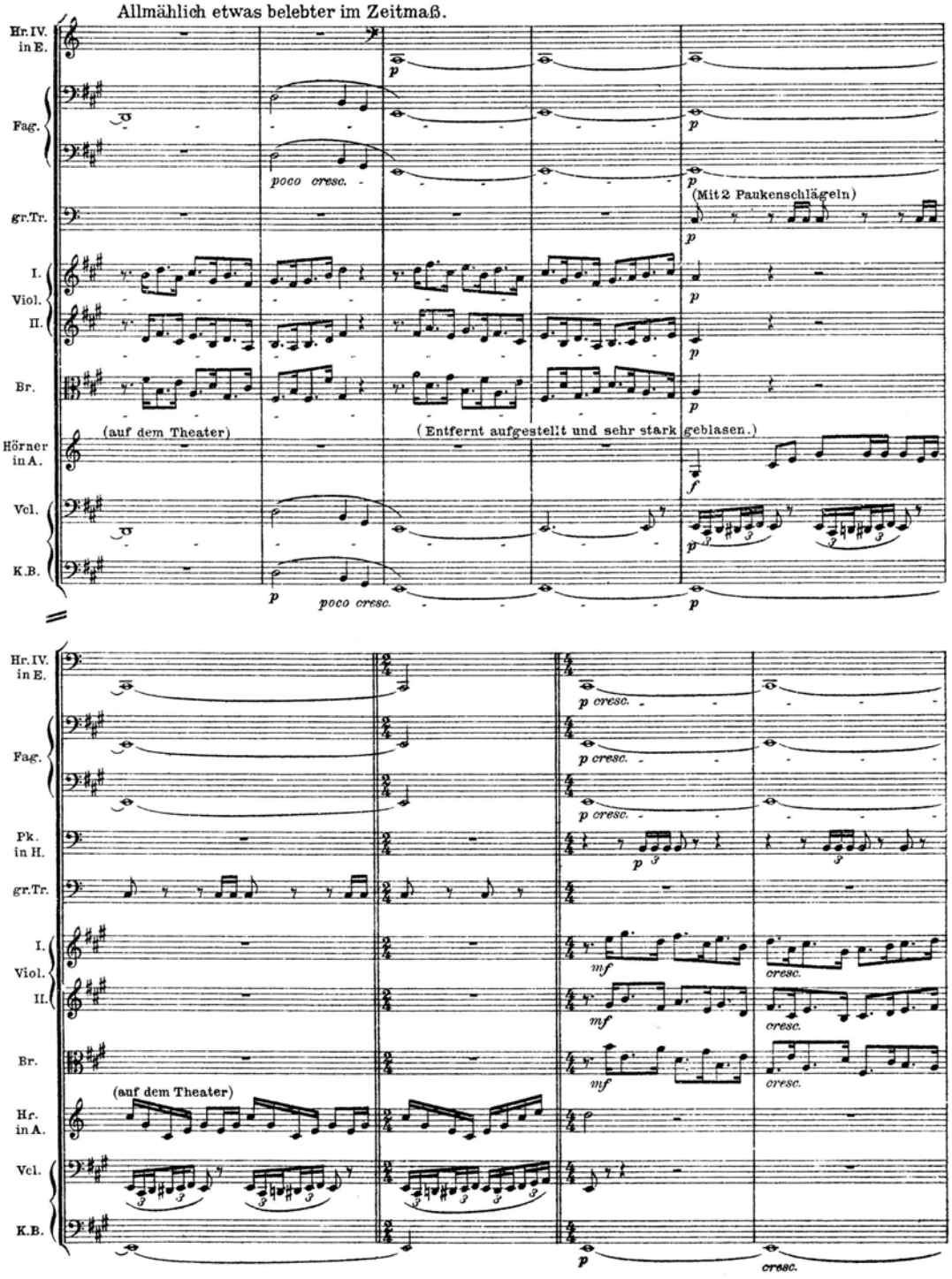


[3] Reproduced from Linnenbrügger, vol. 1, 188.

Example 26a. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier I*, Praeludium XIII in F-sharp Major, BWV 858: "this reminds us of *Die Msinger* ('continuation of Bach') …" Note the opening fanfare-like figure, which is often followed by a trill on its repetition, and the complex dotted cross-rhythms.

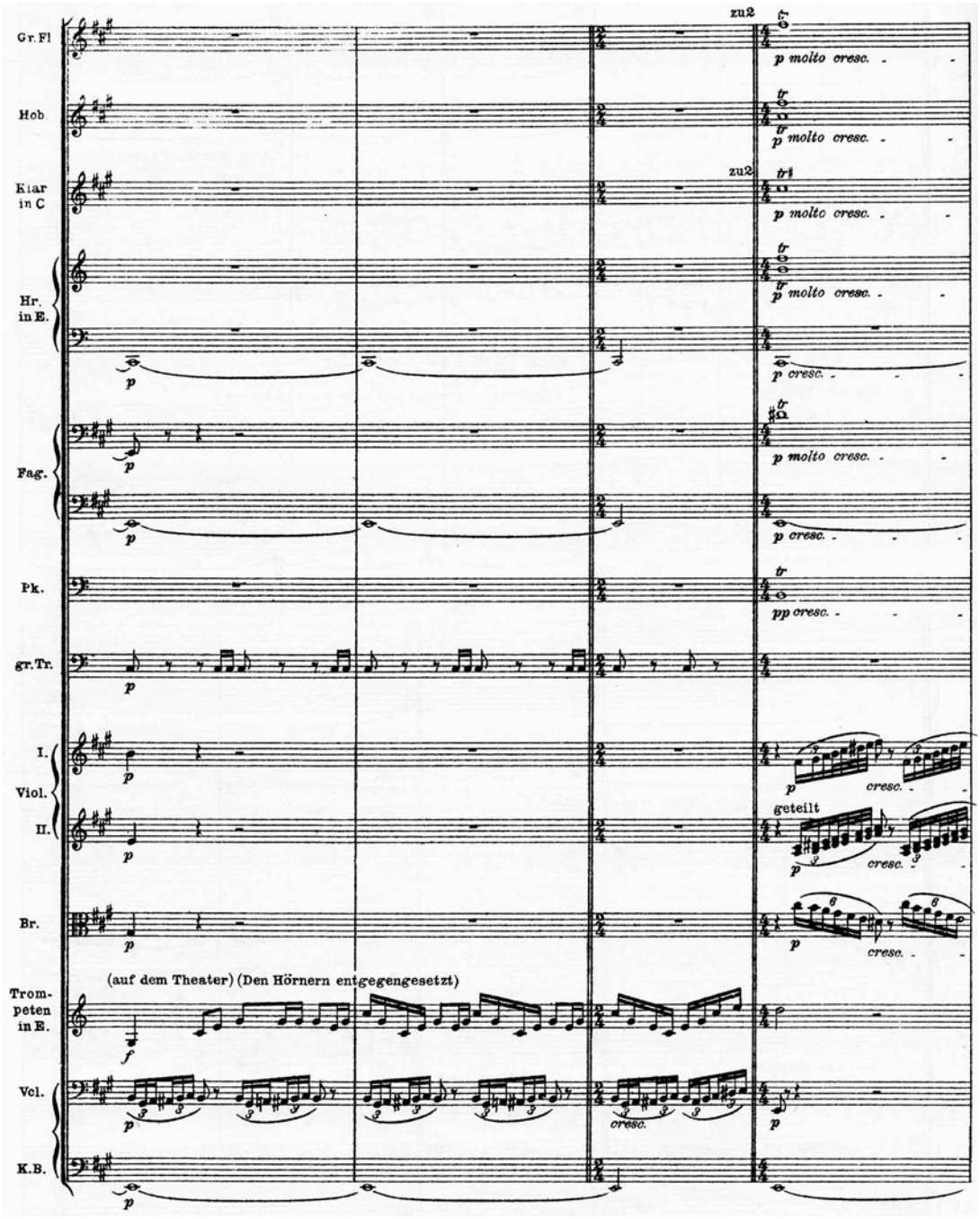


Example 26b. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four-Five (transformation): Note the triadic fanfare (first in the offstage horns, then trumpets), which eventually ends with a trill in the woodwinds. Wagner's dotted rhythms recall those in BWV 858 but are less complex.

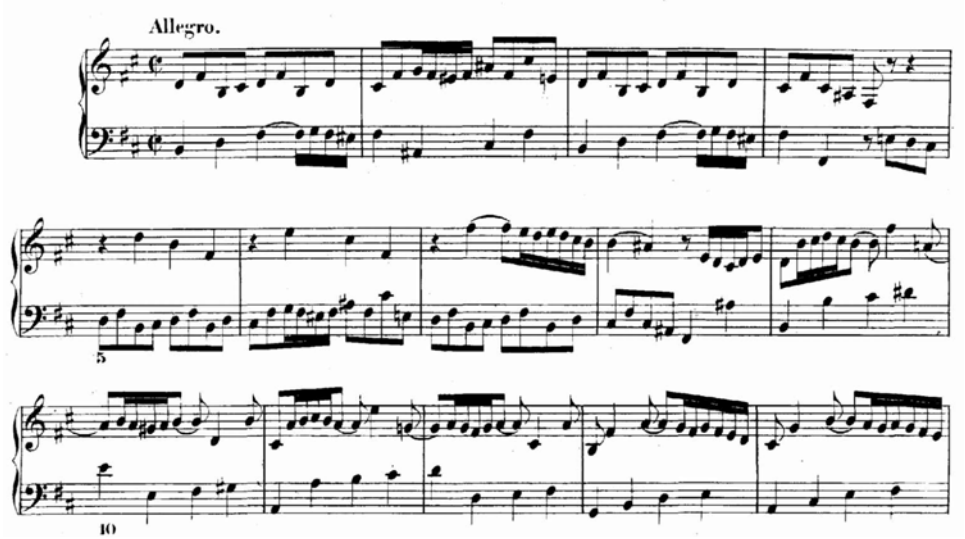


continues

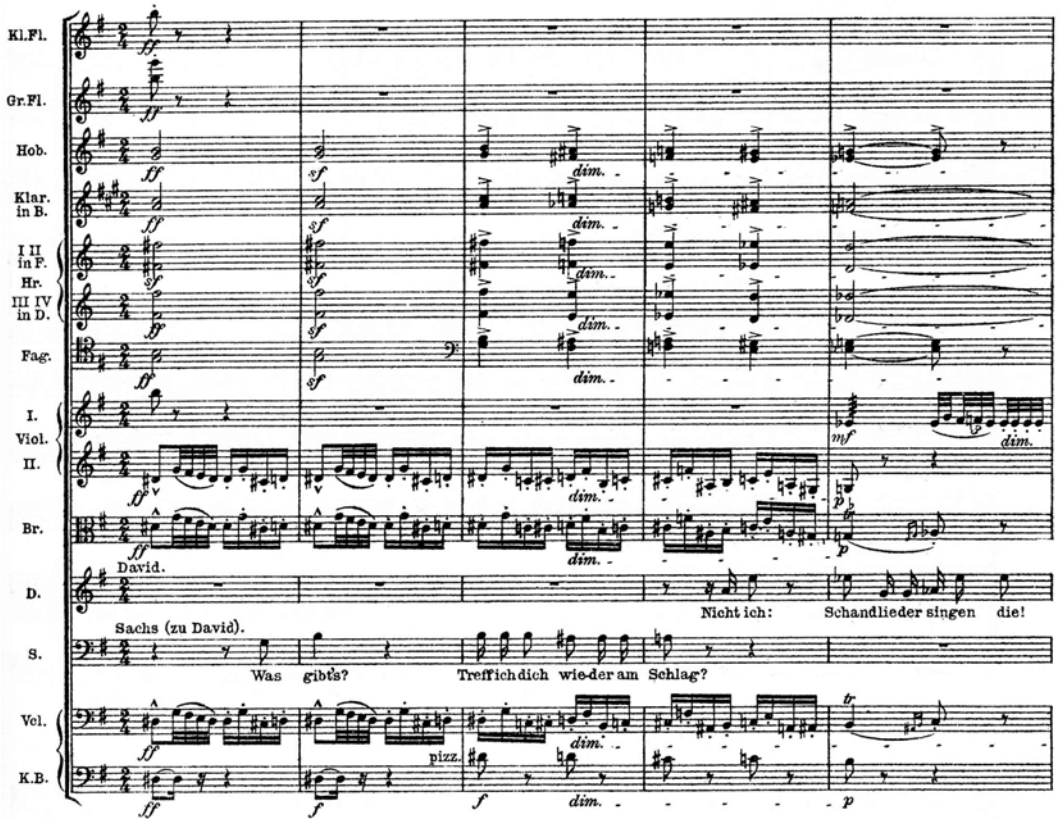
Example 26b. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Three, Scene Four-Five (transformation) (continued).



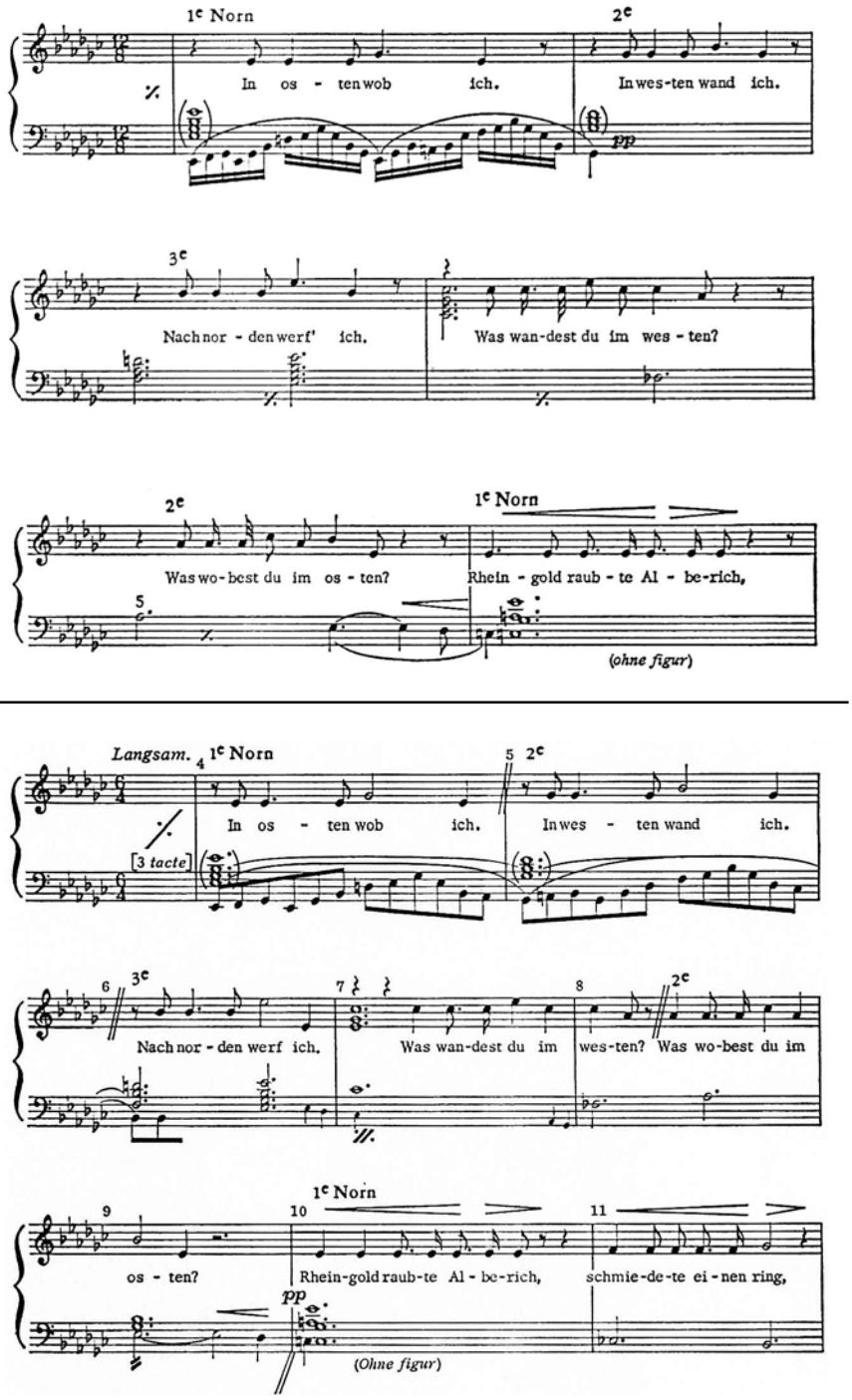
Example 27a. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier II*, Praeludium XXIV in B minor, BWV 893: Compare the main rising motive, punctuated by a chromatic descent in the bass, with Example 27b.



Example 27b. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Act Two, Scene One: Sachs catches David fighting again. The staccato motive in the strings will reappear in the "Schusterlied." It combines the treble and bass ideas in BWV 893.

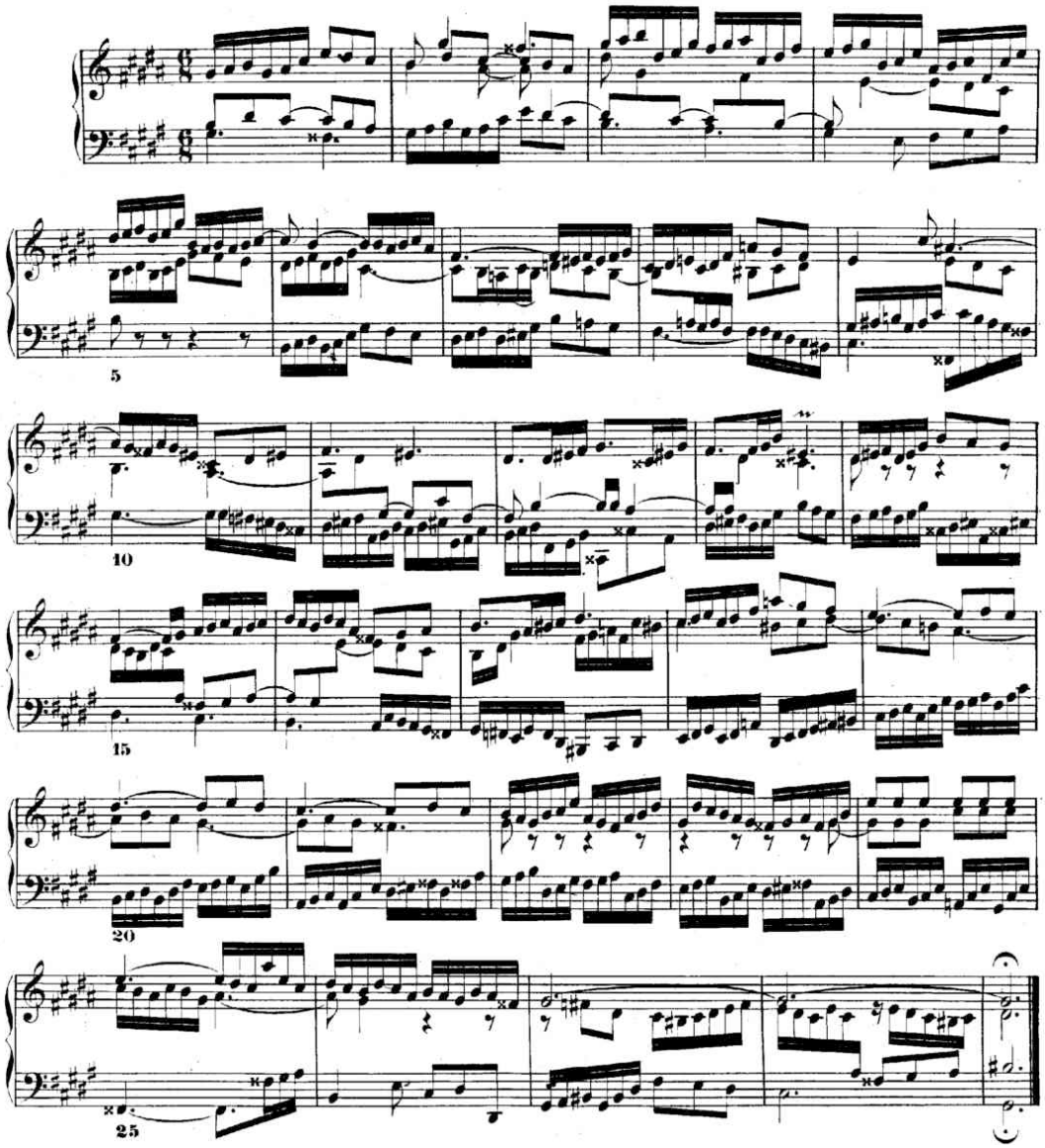


Example 28a. *Siegfrieds Tod*, Prologue (two versions, original sketches [July/August 1850]): Wagner's repeated rising and falling figuration recalls what "enchants and moves one" in BWV 863. Note that some passages are marked "*ohne figur*."[4]



[4] Reproduced from Bailey, "Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfrieds Tod*," 472 and 485.

Example 28b. Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier I*, Praeludium XVIII in G-sharp minor, BWV 863: This prelude "enchants and moves one, and its fugue R. calls a fairy tale told by the grandmother in the *Edda*." Note the opening rising and falling motive and the constant "weaving" sixteenth-note motion.



APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WAGNER'S WRITINGS CITED[1]

1834

"Die deutsche Oper" ["German Opera"]
(published anonymously in *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 10 June 1834)

1840

"De la musique allemande" ["On German Music"]
(published in *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 12 July 1840; translated and republished as "Über deutsches Musikwesen" in GS 1, 149-66)

"'Stabat Mater' de Pergolèse, arrangé pour grand orchestre avec choeurs par Alexis Lvoff, membre des Académies de Bologne et de Saint-Pétersbourg"
["'Stabat mater' by Pergolesi, arranged for large orchestra with choirs by Alexei Lvov, member of the Academies of Bologna and of Saint Petersburg"]
(published in *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 11 October 1840)

1846

"Die königliche Kapelle betreffend" ["Concerning the Royal Kapelle"]
(completed on 1 March 1846)

1848

"Entwurf zur Organisation eines deutschen National-Theaters für das Königreich Sachsen" ["Plan for the Organization of a German National Theater for the Kingdom of Saxony"]
(completed on 11 May 1848; delivered 18 May in person to the court's cabinet; GS 2, 233-73)

"Trinkspruch am Gendenktage des 300jährigen Bestehens der königlichen musikalischen Kapelle in Dresden" ["Toast on the Occasion of the Tercentary of the Existence of the Royal Musical Kapelle in Dresden"]
(speech delivered on 22 September 1848; GS 2, 229-32)

"Die Nibelungensage (Mythus)" ["The Nibelung Saga (Myth)"]
(completed 4 October 1848; published as "Der Nibelungen-Mythus. Als Entwurf zu einem Drama" ["The Nibelung Myth, a Sketch for a Drama"] in GS 2, 156-66)

1849

Die Wibelungen: Weltgeschichte aus der Sage [*The Wibelungs: World History from Saga*]

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[1] with dates of writing and first publication, along with page references to GS; after Nattiez, 303-322.

(December 1848-February 1849 [? - read to Eduard Devrient on 22 February 1849]; revised August-September 1849; published Leipzig, early 1850; GS 2, 115-55)

Die Kunst und Revolution [*Art and Revolution*]
(completed in late July 1849; published Leipzig, 1849; GS 3, 8-41)

"Das Künstlertum der Zukunft" ["The Artistry of the Future"]
(notes for an abandoned article, 1849-50)

Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft [*The Artwork of the Future*]
(completed on 4 November 1849; published Leipzig, 1850; GS 3, 42-177)

1850

"Das Judenthum in der Musik" ["Judaism in Music"]
(completed before 22 August 1850; published under the pseudonym "R. Freigedank" in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 3 and 6 September 1850; revised 1869; revised version: GS 5, 66-85)

1851

Oper und Drama [*Opera and Drama*]
(begun after August 1850 and completed on 10 January 1851; published Leipzig,1852; GS 3, 222-320 and 4, 1-229)

"Über die 'Goethestiftung': Brief an Franz Liszt" ["On the Goethe Foundation: Letter to Franz Liszt"]
(letter of 8 May 1851; published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 5 March 1852; GS 5, 5-19)

1852

"Über musikalische Kritik: Brief an den Herausgeber der 'Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik'" ["On Music Criticism: Letter to the Editor of *NZfM*"]
(letter of 25 January 1852 to Franz Brendel; published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 6 February 1852; GS 5, 53-65)

1860

"Zukunftsmusik." An einen frazösischen Freund (Fr. Villot) als Vorwort zu einer Prosa-Übersetzung meiner Operndichtungen [*"The Music of the Future": Letter to a French Friend (Frédéric Villot) as Foreword to a Prose Translation of my Opera Poems*]
(completed by 13 [?] September 1860; published in *Quarter Poèmes d'opéra traduits en prose français précédés d'une Lettre sur la musique par Richard Wagner*, Paris and Leipzig, 1861; GS 7, 87-137)

1867

Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik [*German Art and German Politics*]

(published incompletely in twelve installments in *Süddeutsche Presse*, 24 September-19 December 1867; published complete in pamphlet form, Leipzig, 1868; GS 8, 30-124)

"[Censuren I:] W. H. Riehl. ('Neues Novellenbuch')" ["Review of W. H. Riehl's *Neues Novellenbuch*"]
(published anonymously in *Süddeteusche Presse* in November 1867; GS 8, 205-13)

1869

Über das Dirigiren [*On Conducting*]
(begun 31 October 1869; published Leipzig, 1869; GS 8, 261-337)

1870

Beethoven
(written 20 July - 11 September 1870; published Leipzig, 1870; GS 9, 61-126)

1871

Über die Bestimmung der Oper [*On the Destiny of Opera*]
(lecture written March-April 1871; delivered to the Prussian Academy of Arts on 28 April 1871; published Leipzig, 1871; GS 9, 127-56)

"Vorwort zur Gesammtherausgabe" ["Foreword to the Complete Edition"]
(dated in manuscript 22 May 1871; published Leipzig, July 1871; GS 1, iii-vii)

"Brief an einen italienischen Freund über die Aufführung des 'Lohengrin' in Bologna" ["Letter to an Italian Friend on the Performance of 'Lohengrin' in Bologna"]
(letter addressed to Arrigo Boito, dated 7 November 1871; GS 9, 287-91)

1872

"An Friedrich Nietzsche" ["Letter to Friedrich Nietzsche"]
(dated 12 June 1872; published 23 June 1872 in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*; GS 9, 292-302)

Über Schauspieler und Sänger [*On Actors and Singers*]
(completed 14 September 1872; published Leipzig, 1872; GS 9, 157-230)

"Schreiben an der Bürgermeister von Bologna" ["Letter to the Mayor of Bologna"]
(letter dated 1 October 1872; published 11 October 1872 in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*; GS 9, 291-94)

"Über die Benennung 'Musikdrama'" ["On the Term 'Music Drama'"]
(dated [through Cosima Wagner's diary entry ?] 26 October 1872; published 8 November 1872 in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*; GS 9, 302-8)

1876

"Letzte Bitte an meine lieben Genossen. Letzter Wunsch (Zum ersten Festspiel)" ["Last Request to My Dear Colleagues: Last Wish (for the First Festival)"]
(dated 13 August 1876)

APPENDIX B

WAGNER'S HOLDINGS OF EARLY MUSIC AND MUSIC HISTORIES BEFORE BEETHOVEN[1]

Dresden:[2]

Hagen, Friedrich Heinrich von der, ed. *Minnesinger. Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, aus alten bekannten Handschriften und früheren Drucken gesammelt und berichtigt, mit der Lesarten derselben, Geschichte des Lebens der Dichter und ihrer Werke, Sangweisen der Lieder, Reimverzeichnis der Anfänge, und Abbildungen sämmtlicher Handschriften*. 5 vols. in 4. Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1838-61.

The bulk of this was published in 1838, with some supplemental material added later in 1856 and 1861; Wagner did not own the last volume. A total page count of well over 2,500 in quarto size for the volumes Wagner did possess. Of course, due to this repertoire's poor history of written representation, most of the space is taken up by texts and von der Hagen's commentaries. He does include diplomatic transcriptions of music where possible, along with some facsimiles from the original sources. With the musical material is a detailed essay discussing realization of the songs.

Janssen, Nikolaus A. [Nicolaas Adrianus]. *Wahre Grundregeln des Gregorianischen oder Choralgesanges: ein archäologisch-liturgisches Lehrbuch des Gregorianischen Kirchengesanges, für Priester-, Knaben- und Schullehrer-Seminarien, sowie für Organisten und zum Selbstgebrauch.* Herausgegeben, übersetzt und bearbeitet mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Cölnischen und Münsterischen Kirchengesangsweisen von J.C.B. Smeddinck. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1846.

Originally an unpublished Dutch treatise, *De ware grondregels van den gregoriaenschen zang* (n.d.). Translated and brought into German usage by Father J. Carl B. Smeddinck.

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[1] The ordering follows that found in the list by Martin Geck, 132-3. As much as possible, the items are listed chronologically with respect to the subjects they cover.

[2] See Westernhagen.

Wackernagel, Karl Eduard Philipp. *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von Martin Luther bis auf Nicolaus Herman und Ambrosius Blaurer*. 2 vols. Stuttgart: S.G. Liesching, 1841.

A collection of 850 hymns from the oldest and most reliable texts with a notes on these sources. The preface includes a broad overview of the history of hymnology, along with a discussion of issues facing that field.

Ulibischeff, Alexander. *Mozarts Leben nebst einer Übersicht der allgemeinen Geschichte der Musik und einer Analyse der Hauptwerk Mozarts.* Translated by A. Schraishuon. 3 vols. Stuttgart: Becker, 1847.[3]

Zurich / Bayreuth:

Books

Paul, Oscar. *Handlexikon der Tonkunst*. Leipzig, 1873.

Reissmann, August. *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*. 4 vols. in 3. Munich: Friedrich Bruckmann, 1863-64 (vols. 1-2) and Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (L. W. Reisland), 1864 (vol. 3).

Non-European musics are discussed at the beginning of this encyclopedic study. The focus then moves to the development of Western music from the early Christian era up to Wagner's day, discussing his early works through *Tristan und Isolde*. Includes biographical summaries for major composers. The author places great emphasis on folk sources and the part folk music plays in the development of Western music.

Kraussold, Max. *Historisch-musikalisches Handbuch für Kirchen- und Choralgesang*. Erlangen, 1855.

Kraussold, Max. *Die Musik in ihrer kulturhistorischen Entwicklung und Bedeutung von der ältesten Zeit bis auf R. Wagner*. Bayreuth, 1876.

At that time one of the few attempts at a history of music to include Wagner and other contemporary composers.

vander Straeten, Edmond. *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle*. Vols. 1-3. Brussels: G.-A. van Trigt, 1867-75.

[3] This occurs only in Minna Wagner's list and was not found with the collection when it was rediscovered and catalogued by Westernhagen.

Köstlin, Heinrich Adolf. *Geschichte der Musik im Umriß für die Gebildeten aller Stände*. Tübingen, 1875.

Plutarch. *Über die Musik*. Edited by Rudolf Georg Hermann Westphal. Breslau: F.E.C. Leuckart, 1875.

Wesphal, Rudolf Georg Hermann. *Geschichte der alten und mittelalterlichen Musik*. Breslau: F.E.C. Leuckart, 1865.

The first and third parts of an incomplete work of which Plutarch, *Über die Musik* is generally considered the third part and Westphal's overview, the first. The latter was originally bound with the lettering "Westphal. Geschichte der Musik. I. 1864."

Boetius [Boethius]. *Fünf Bücher über die Musik aus der lateinischen in die deutsche Sprache übertragen und mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der griechischen Harmonik*. Edited by Oscar Paul. Leipzig: F.E.C. Leuckart, 1872.

Wackernagel, [Karl Eduard] Philipp. *Martin Luthers geistliche Lieder mit den zu seinen Lebzeiten gebräuchlichen Singweisen*. Stuttgart: S.G. Liesching, 1848.

According to Cosima Wagner's diary, "unfortunately with illustrations" (Sunday, 2 March 1873).[4]

Linder, Ernst Otto. *Geschichte des deutschen Liedes im XVIII. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1871.

Rudhardt, Franz Michael. *Geschichte der Oper am Hofe zu München nach archivalischen Quellen*. Vol. 1: *Die italianische Oper von 1654-1787*. Freising: Franz Datterer, 1865.

No other volumes in this series ever appeared.

Bitter, Carl Hermann. *Johann Sebastian Bach*. 2 vols. Berlin, 1865.

Spitta, Philipp. *Johann Sebastian Bach*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1873 and 1879.

Schmid, Anton. *Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck: dessen Leben und tonkünstlerisches Wirken, ein biographisch-ästhetischer Versuch und ein Beitrag*

[4] CTa, 600.

zur Geschichte der dramatischen Musik in der zweiten Hälfte des siebenzehnten [sic] *Jahrhunderts.* Leipzig: F. Fleischer, 1854.[5]

Nohl, Ludwig, ed. *Mozarts Briefe: nach den Originalen herausgegeben*. Salzburg: Mayrische Buchhandlung, 1865.

Jahn, Otto. *W. A. Mozart.* 4 vols. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1856-59.

Mozart — ein Lebensbild. Munich, 1866.

Franck, E. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Zauberflöte*. Mannheim, 1875.

Nohl, Ludwig, ed. *Musiker-Briefe: eine Sammlung Briefe von C.W. von Gluck, Ph. E. Bach, Jos. Haydn, Carl Maria von Weber und Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy*. Leipzig, Duncker und Humblot, 1867.

Scores

Proske, Carl, ed. *Musia divina. Sive Thesaurus Concentuum Selectissimorum omni Cultui Divino totius anni juxta ritum Sanctae Ecclesiae Catholicae inservientum: Ab Excellentissimis superioris aevi Musicis numeris harmonicis compositorum.* vols. 1-4. Ratisbonae [Regensburg]: Fridericus Pustet, 1853-63.

Including music for Vespers, including Psalms, hymns, and falsi bordoni, Magnificats, Marian antiphons, other various motets, and masses by Agazzari, Agostini, Aichinger, Felice Anerio, Bernabei, Biordi, Costantini, Croce, Dentice, Ferrario, Finetti, Fossa, Guidetti, Handl, Hassler, Lassus, Marenzio, Morales, Nanini, Ortiz, Palestrina, Paminger, Pitoni, Rosselli, A. Scarlatti, Suriano, Turini, Uttendal, Vecchi, Viadana, Victoria, Victorinus, Zoila, Zuchino, and others.

Proske, Carl, ed. *Selectus novus missarum*. 4 vols. Ratisbonae: Fridericus Pustet, 1856-61.

Including masses by Felice Anerio, *Missa. Quatuor vocum*; Andrea Gabrieli, *Pater peccavi*; Hassler, *Missa. Octo vocum*; Lassus, *Missa Qual donna attende a gloriosa fama* and *Super in die tribulationis*; Paciotti, *Si bona suscipimus*; Palestrina, *Assumpta est Maria*, *Dum complerentur*, and *Veni Sponsa Christi*; Francesco Soriano, *Missa super voces musicales* and *Nos autem gloriari*; Orazio

[5] incorrectly listed as "Schmidt" by Geck

Vecchi, *Missa pro defunctis*; and Victoria, *O quam gloriosum est regnum*, S*imile est regnum coelorum, Trahe me post te*, and *Vidi speciosam*.

Palestrina. *Motteten*. 6 issues. Edited by Franz Xaver Witt. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel.

Hassler, Hans Leo. *Missa secunda*. Edited by Franz Xaver Witt. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel.

Messen und Litaneien: Asola, Anerio, Hassler, Palestrina, and Lasso. 1 vol.

Motetten altitalienischer Meister. 1 vol.

Bach, Johann Sebastian:
Messe in h moll (Bach Gesellschaft edition, 1856),
Kantaten (vol. 1: BWV 1-10, vol. 2: BWV 11-20, vol. 3: BWV 21-30 & 30a, Bach Gesellschaft edition, 1851, 1852, and 1855),
Weihnachtsoratorium (Bach Gesellschaft edition, 1856),
Grosse Passionsmusik nach dem Evangelium Matthaei von Johann Sebastian Bach [*Matthäuspassion*] (1st ed., Berlin: Schlesinger, 1830),
"Ein' feste Burg" (cantata), edited by Schneider (Breitkopf & Härtel),
various cantatas in piano arrangement,
Die Motetten, edited by Gottfried Schicht,
Das wolhtemperierte Klavier, in *Klavierwerke*, edited by Carl Czerny and Friedrich Conrad Griepenkerl (C.F. Peters),
Das wolhtemperierte Klavier, two editions edited by Franz Liszt and Carl Tausig.

Scarlatti, Domenico. 6 *Klaviersonaten*.

Handel, Georg Friedrich: many oratorio scores

Gluck , Christoph Willibald: many opera scores

Haydn, Franz Joseph:
various symphonies in score and piano arrangements for 2 and 4 hands,
string quartets,
oratorios in piano arrangements

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus:
various symphonies in score,
string quartets,
operas in score and piano arrangements

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Dahlhaus, Carl. *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*. Translated by Mary Whittall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

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